DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 597 FL 025 641

AUTHOR	Ozolins, Uldis
TITLE	Interpreting and Translating in Australia: Current Issues and International Comparisons.
INSTITUTION	National Languages and Literacy Inst., Melbourne (Australia).
ISBN	ISBN-1-875578-83-8
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	150p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Language Australia, GPO Box 372 F, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3001
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Certification; Cultural Pluralism; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Immigrants; *Interpreters; Interpretive Skills; Occupational Information; Policy Formation; Professional Education; *Public Policy; Second Language Instruction; Second Languages; *Translation; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia

ABSTRACT

This report describes the role and status of interpreting and translation (I/T) training and services in Australia and examines a number of issues that relate to policy formation and service provision. It first describes the context for I/T service needs in Australia, then outlines the history and structure of the field in that country, including the relationship between I/T and Australian language policy, federal, state, and private provision of I/T services, and establishment of national standards and a national certification system. A subsequent section details current issues in I/T in Australia, including issues specific to language service organizations, to certification and training, and to different domains of I/T work (indigenous languages, women's/family language service needs, and international communication needs). The final section looks at global trends in I/T, outlines some international perspectives, compares and contrasts the Australian and international experiences, and discusses issues concerning less commonly spoken languages. Appended materials include a list of I/T agencies and contacts in Australia and other countries, statistics on the work of the language service run by the Australian department of immigration and multicultural affairs, and a glossary of relevant acronyms. (MSE)

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Interpreting & translating in Australia:

Current issues and international comparisons

Uldis Ozolins

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Interpreting and Translating in Australia: Current issues and international comparisons

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The Centre for Research & Development in Interpreting/Translating is affiliated with Language Australia:
the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia
LA-NLLIA 1998

LANGUAGE
AUSTRALIA
The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia

Interpreting and translating in Australia: current issues and international comparisons

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Ozolins, Uldis, 1948–
Interpreting and translating in Australia: current issues and international comparisons

Bibliography.
ISBN 1 875578 83 8

1. Translating and interpreting – Government policy – Australia.
2. Linguistic minorities – Services for – Australia.
3. Translating and interpreting – Government policy.
4. Linguistic minorities – Services for.

362.8400994

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Foreword

Interpreting/Translating services to provide the means of communication between host institutions and multilingual populations are becoming more common throughout the world. The need for such services, and related needs of training, accreditation, financial provision, and sometimes legal regulation, have grown exponentially in recent decades, as population movements of diverse kinds have resulted in the arrival of new multilingual populations in many societies. In other cases, increased awareness of the need of older indigenous multilingual populations has also led to increased provision of services. In some cases, links have also been made between the need to develop language services for immigrant or indigenous populations and the need for language services for external business or international contacts.

In this context, while the need for communication is universal, the actual forms of communication used still vary greatly, and different countries have adopted in some cases radically different strategies to respond to this need. In some countries, such need has not yet been recognized by official bodies; in others, quite comprehensive provisions have been made. Interpreting/Translating is just one of many possible modes of communication is such situations, but one that is increasingly adopted. However, while it may be thought that Interpreting/Translating [I/T] is a readily understood and unproblematic practice, and a practice with a long history and fine professional tradition, these newer situations of I/T practice in fact raise manifold difficulties and often confusions. Moreover, I/T in these contexts has developed at a considerable distance from some previously established forms of I/T such as international conference interpreting or technical or literary translation, and in many cases these different fields appear to have surprisingly little in common.

This study arises to fill a gap in scholarly understanding not only in Australia but also further afield, as a number of countries develop I/T services, often responding to common problems but adopting different approaches to I/T provision. This often pathbreaking work in I/T provision proceeds usually without reference to international models or experience gained elsewhere, and also often draws little involvement from language policy professionals, social planners or relevant institutions. I/T often remains a side-lined activity.

Within Australia too, while there have been many significant innovations in I/T and there has been an overall comprehensive approach to migrant settlement (even if more patchily to communication needs with the deaf and Aboriginal communities), there still often exists limited understanding of I/T and its potential among many institutions and professions. There have been few detailed studies of I/T in Australia, little information drawn from other situations around the world, and generally little scholarly work at all in this field, thus leaving policy development to the vagaries of institutional imperatives and drifting ideologies of service provision.

The purposes of this present report are to:

- outline the development of I/T in Australia
- give a description of present structures and institutions related to I/T service, training, profession and accreditation
- analyse past and current policy developments and describe the issues facing the field currently
- provide a benchmark against which to measure and evaluate future policy developments and initiatives in the field
- place Australian experience in an international context by comparing and contrasting the Australian situation to that of other multilingual countries
- provide references and information for those interested in following up contacts either in Australia or overseas.

This report builds on an earlier smaller report on I/T policy by this author in 1991, which looked only at Australian developments up to that time (Ozolins 1991). With a number of quite rapid changes to the policy environment in I/T since then, and significant changes to social policy perspectives generally, there is need for not only updating but for providing broader national and international perspectives to our understanding of I/T in Australia and elsewhere.

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The author thanks the many individuals and organisations who responded to queries and provided information on many aspects of I/T in Australia and overseas. Special thanks to my two research assistants, Vivien Pagourelias and Anne Richardson, who provided a mountain of material for me to turn into this report. Research for this report was undertaken with the assistance of a Grant from the Australian Research Council [ARC].

Chapter 1

Interpreting/Translating in the global context: multilingual populations everywhere!

This study is concerned to look at I/T provision in countries faced with the need for communication between multilingual populations and host institutions. The study will focus for the most part on Australia, which in the decades since World War II has absorbed an increasingly diverse immigrant population and has responded, at first slowly and uncertainly, but recently with increased assurance and innovation, to the manifold communication needs involved.

Australia is a classic country of immigration, one of the nations of the New World that – having overrun and often substantially annihilated their local indigenous populations – attracted millions of migrants to new lands where they would be able to become the builders of new societies, and citizens of a future America or Australia.

Yet the advent of multilingual populations and cultural diversity is certainly not restricted to 'traditional' immigration countries. For several very specific reasons, cultural diversity has now become the experience of almost every country. Four clear factors have brought this about:

- Immigration of various kinds, from population and nation-building attempts to 'guest-worker' programs, have brought and usually brought to stay large segments of population usually of a different language and culture. Some more recent freer movement of workers (eg within the European Union or South-East Asia and the Middle East) also adds to this.
- The growing salience of indigenous minorities (in public terms, if not always in numbers) both at a local level and also in international consciousness and monitoring. This relates both to native and other traditional minority populations, but also to specific population groups with communication needs relevant here, such as deaf communities. Language needs are thus clearly not related to immigration issues alone.
- Refugee streams of great diversity, coming to almost all countries, even those with negligible migration of other kinds. This results in increasing diversity even in previously immigrant countries, with these refugees now often coming from quite different countries than hitherto migrants came from.
- A fundamental break in social and national attitudes. Previously, many groups speaking different languages tended to be geographically restricted and less socially visible, or highly marginalized and ignored, and themselves relatively withdrawn, disengaged and non-assertive of their own identity. The situation has now changed to one where many countries (even hitherto among the most rigid in national outlook) have started to recognize and in some cases welcome cultural diversity and a multilingual population. In these cases there has also been some acceptance of the need for service provision. Groups themselves have also become more assertive, pushing issues from land rights (in the case of some indigenous minorities) to access to services to social justice and broader issues of participation and citizenship.

Some initial distinctions may usefully be made in terms of settlement ideologies of receiving countries for their immigrants and refugees. Immigrant countries of the New World (USA, Canada, Australia etc) explicitly accepted large diverse immigrant intakes at various periods of their history. While actual settlement practices varied between countries, this basis of explicitly accepting migration then clearly places upon the public agenda what arrangements should be made to cope with this diversity. We shall note the considerable differences that existed and still do exist in terms of provision of language services among these counties, but the overall accepting ideology is an important starting point for consideration of services.

However, since World War II this growing cultural diversity has also come in contexts where hitherto societies were extremely careful to define themselves as nation-states, perhaps with some historically-defined minorities, but with no tradition of immigration. Without going into a detailed study of nationalism and language ideology, the assumption that people of one ethnos speaking the one language should constitute a nation-state was the norm certainly in Europe and many countries of Asia and elsewhere. In many cases, of course, societies were themselves already multinational or multilingual, with Belgium or Switzerland, India or the Soviet Union in varied ways serving as prime examples, but attitudes towards immigration or towards other languages did not differ because of this. Historical minorities had some recognition and varying degrees of protection under national laws or in some cases international conventions, but such specific provisions were seen as having no relevance to newer immigrant multilingual populations.

Particularly where the cultural diversity came from guest-worker programs with an initial expectation that workers would not stay, or from the gravitation of large numbers of former colonial subjects to the metropolis, this influx of linguistically and culturally different populations was often treated with hostility. Yet the reality of the cultural diversity created remains even after further recruitment has stopped or been slowed by tighter immigration controls than there were a couple of decades ago – as in the United Kingdom, for example. Indeed, even tighter controls on 'normal' or 'guest-worker' immigration do not mean the end of cultural diversity: as virtually all advanced countries now accept refugees, cultural diversity will continue. Also some immigration systems, avowedly non-discriminatory in terms of race, attempt particularly to attract middle-class migrants or entrepreneurs or investors, which attracts a culturally diverse immigration intake again.

Importantly, some of the previous isolation of a minority in a host country from their former homeland is also being rapidly overcome, by modern communication and increased travel. Thus, the former distinctions between 'immigrant languages' and languages of trade, business or diplomacy are rapidly breaking down, again with significant consequences for I/T.

The fact of linguistic diversity of course need not result in any specific outcome in terms of provision of language services. Historically, such linguistic diversity can be handled in a variety of ways before I/T provision is considered:

- society can simply not recognise any need, the often typical historical reaction to indigenous populations
- society can see it as the responsibility of the individual who does not speak the dominant language
- society can adopt the use of agents, representatives, middlemen of various kinds to communicate. A police force contracting a few indigenous police helpers is one example here; trading through an agent who is linguistically suited to one's market is another. Communication here is generally a sub-set of wider services provided.

Even today, the above responses can still be found in some countries. However, in increasing numbers of countries, as our survey shows, societies are starting to recognise such communication needs as being a permanent feature of the social setting, and may turn to I/T as a means of communication. In this study we have looked at these developments in a number of countries, and a clear spectrum can be identified of response and provision around the world. Such a spectrum can be represented as follows:

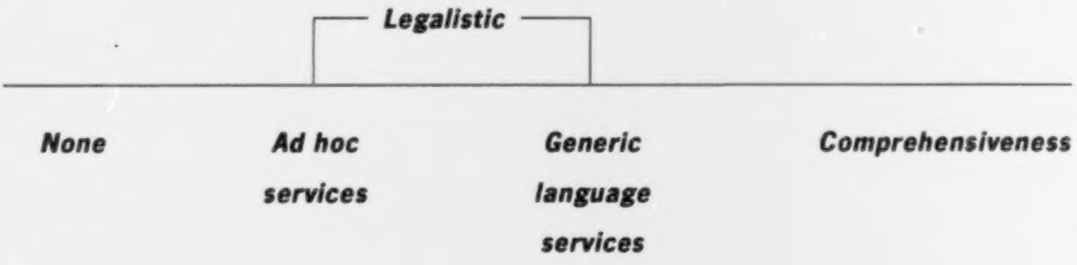

Figure 1. The spectrum of responsiveness to I/T needs

Countries where *no* language services are provided are becoming fewer. This situation still obtains in classic countries of short-term labour immigration or guest-worker situations, though now the countries that could be identified here would no longer be the oft-cited Germany but more likely the Gulf States or Japan. In these countries, language difference is seen as an entirely individual and peripheral matter. There may well be an I/T profession, even a strong one, in such situations, but it would see itself as being exclusively concerned with business or other international contacts, and have no involvement in meeting local language needs. Cases where hostile contact situations have developed between mainstream societies and indigenous populations – the case of the Brazilian frontier, for example – would also fit into this category.

In many countries now *ad hoc* services have developed as communication needs are identified as a persistent issue for public bodies and governments. Attempts are made usually by individual institutions or services – the social security system, perhaps, or individual hospitals or schools – to find go-betweens, who may be expected to fulfil the interpreter role or some other mediating role, and who are used by services in a variety of ways. There is usually no concept of training, no thought of accreditation or registration, but response to an immediate need that involves getting people who speak the two languages to operate in whatever way they are capable and whatever way the service sees fit. As a general rule, those countries of most recent immigration and most recent awareness of their cultural diversity would figure here, but in some cases countries that were able to ignore their language needs seemingly for decades also fit into this category. The United Kingdom until the last decade would probably fit in here, as well as present practices in Belgium, France and now Germany.

The *Legalistic* approach is characterized in the above schema as an optional stage, because in many cases there are no legalistic imperatives of a constitutional-driven or rights-driven kind that will necessitate this step. By the legalistic approach is meant situations such as in the United States where certain rights have now been guaranteed to non-English speakers in dealing with particular public institutions, in this case in relation to I/T specifically the courts, and governments are mandated to effect this. Thus in the USA rights of non-English speakers in courts have now been enshrined in federal and state Court Interpreters Acts and court interpreting services have been established as a result. There has also been a little of this orientation in countries which may only be at an *ad hoc* stage of language services generally, but where government for its own policy ends (which may or may not be rights-driven) identifies the legal system as a priority area for interpreters, as in the Danish situation with authorized interpreters mandated under the Administration of Justice Act, or similar provisions in some states of Germany, or long-standing provision of court interpreters in South Africa or Malaysia. On the other hand, this legalistic orientation has had little influence in many other countries, particularly those with a common law tradition or no real history of rights litigation. In Australia or Canada, where constitutional guarantees of this kind are muted or nonexistent, there has been no explicit prioritising of court interpreting over language services for other areas of public life. It should be noted finally that in such cases as the USA, this legalistic orientation has not come as part of a broad policy response to I/T needs, and there may well be poorly developed language services in other sectors – indeed, we find that I/T services for other areas are still usually at an *ad hoc* stage, with almost all government interest focusing on court interpreting, even though technically the constitutional rights granted should obtain in all public spheres and services.

The stage of *generic language services* has been reached in various countries where governments have attempted to introduce broader-based language services that make some attempt to cover a variety of public sectors. These services may be differently organised in different places – the UK in recent years has set up a national Register of Public Sector Interpreters, and backed this up with some training and accreditation. The development of Language Line in the UK as a telephone interpreting service also provides another generic service, as is also the case with telephone interpreting in Holland. In Norway, local governments have developed language services for the public sector very rapidly in recent years as Norway has faced unexpected intakes of refugees, and has learnt quickly from Swedish and other models. Canada has set up generic language services usually on a provincial basis, as well as providing innovative services for native languages.

Comprehensiveness takes us to situations where generic language services are backed by other official and professional attempts to support these services – by training, by accreditation, by having those professionals working with interpreters also trained, and having broad government principles of access established and heeded by public sector and relevant private sector agencies. Australia is clearly towards the Comprehensive end of this spectrum, and

Sweden is possibly the closest other example. Developments in the UK, if they continue at their recent pace may in time achieve this level of comprehensiveness.

Understanding of role and professional issues in I/T

In detailing this spectrum, it is not suggested that one stage must inevitably lead to another, and it is also not suggested that different needs may not be well met at various stages before comprehensiveness. While this spectrum gives us an overview of language service spread, nevertheless other issues remain obscure from a simple linear spectrum. Among the most central of these is the understanding of role of I/T practitioners and related issues of status, purpose and professional orientation. Even where language services are extensively provided, these issues often continue to be confusing and sometimes undermining of good practice, not only for the practitioners but for all of those who work with interpreters in multilingual contexts.

Indeed, most language services, even in the most comprehensive systems, have been established with little regard to professional issues, and it is certainly not the case as we shall see that the countries with the most comprehensive language services also have the most developed I/T profession.

Yet at the same time in another context I/T did develop as a field, as a profession and as a well-regarded and prestigious field of activity. *International conference interpreting* has been able to establish itself as a professional field since early this century, and it is important to understand the professional and social effect of this field, as it has also profoundly shaped attitudes among interpreters and in public consciousness towards the newer enterprise of I/T for multilingual population/host institutions contact.

International conference interpreting is itself a relatively new profession; while interpreting and translating functions had been practised previously in the rare meetings between international figures and (more commonly) in international written communication, the use of an international lingua franca in diplomatic work (earlier Latin, more recently French) generally enabled direct communication and made interpreting largely unnecessary. This changed almost at one stroke with the significant role played by monolingual Americans at the Versailles peace conference after World War I (Roland 1982). Herbert's (1978) account of this period stressed the innovative nature of the interpreting that had to be done there, undertaken by bilingual military officers as an experiment when the proceedings could not be carried on in French. These early practitioners formed the nucleus of a small but highly skilled corps of interpreters serving the League of Nations and other international meetings. The profession consisted largely of officers of the military or diplomatic service, slowly giving way to private practitioners, who nonetheless came from similar social backgrounds.

As an important advance in technology, the advent of simultaneous interpreting through headphones, conspicuously demonstrated at the Nuremberg war trials after World War II, enhanced the role of the interpreter and made it possible to receive the interpreter's message without great delay or repetition in proceedings, a problem of consecutive interpreting. The small group of international conference interpreters rapidly expanded after World War II, with the growth of international meetings and conferences, and has continued to the present day, most notably in the European context and in the United Nations and other international bodies.

These conference interpreters tended to be highly educated, often having lived in different countries either with their families on international duty or through studying, and had gained languages at an appropriate level. Interpreters in this context were regarded as indispensable to international communication, being granted status and rewarded accordingly, and being seen as part of the vast infrastructure that supports international contact. Professionally, the practitioners maintained their standards through their active and watchful International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), which controlled entry to the profession, ethics and industrial issues.

Two points in particular need to be made about the development of this field and its social position. First, and most decisively, this interpreting was for an élite. It served prominent international figures and prominent international events, gaining its own status from the status of clients it serviced. This is a crucial consideration when we consider the very different attitudes we encounter in relation to liaison interpreting between immigrants or indigenous populations and host institutions. This servicing of an élite has also given the field a particular aura of glamour, and this aura and status have been largely maintained even in a situation where international contacts have increased exponentially in recent decades. For many in the world, interpreting *is* international conference interpreting. Such interpreting essentially provides communication between participants of equal status, or at least those deemed to be so – typically, government leaders, representatives, or technical or administrative experts in a particular field, whose only difference is the language they employ. The interpreter's task then is to provide a purely linguistic service, in a structured and highly predictable environment of exchange among equals.

Secondly, this had influences upon the profession itself. One can say that international I/T developed essentially as a *profession-driven* service, where the profession has great control over its working environment, on a par with other traditional high-status professions. Emerging from the officer caste that provided the first such services at Versailles and afterwards, the civilian profession particularly after World War II and the widespread introduction of simultaneous interpreting quickly set its own standards, reward structure, working conditions and admission to the profession. The founding of AIIC [Association Internationale des Interpréteurs de Conférence] provided a controlling professional body which set standards throughout the profession and throughout the world. This is not to declare this structure was unproblematic or provided solutions to all professional problems faced, and in recent decades this structure of control has come under pressure from several sources, particularly those concerned with restriction of competition. The profession has also been uncertain of how to handle the explosion of need in languages outside the traditional European languages for conference interpreting. Nevertheless, the model of professional control and setting of standards still largely holds, and is depended upon by those employing interpreter services.

The professional position of those providing interpreting in situations of host institution/immigrant or indigenous contact could scarcely be more different. While situations around the world have varied considerably, in few situations has there been an immediate, planned and principled resort to I/T as there was and is with international contacts. There has been, as we saw above, a spectrum of response ranging from ignoring the issue to comprehensive provision. In a very large number of cases, interpreters themselves were not necessarily identified as such or charged with a clear responsibility for communication: often, initial responses were to use bilinguals (or those accepted as bilinguals) to somehow help sort out problems with immigrants. As bilingual aides, or more commonly simply as bilingual workers, where they could be called upon to find out what an immigrant or indigenous client needed. The first 'interpreters' in such situations were typically domestic staff employed in say hospitals or welfare services, whose duties came to include, often informally, communication with clients. In these situations, institutional professionals might not undertake interviews directly with clients, leaving it up to the bilingual to give the gist of what the client needed. Interpreting as a practice slowly came to be identified, but interpreting as a role was understood indistinctly. In many cases family members or friends were used.

In such a context, there was no clear role for interpreters and often no clear understanding that 'interpreting' was what was going on. Those who became full-time professional interpreters in such contexts tended to have low status, and the work was often not seen as professional work.

In terms of status, the situation obtaining in such interviews was radically different to that obtaining in international conference interpreting. Instead of equals meeting on a common basis where they did not share a language, in these situations everything was unequal: often the parties differed radically in status (most commonly working class immigrants or disempowered indigenous people meeting dominant professionals or officials of the State apparatus); they differed in understanding of each others' cultures, background; they were uncertain of each others' situations or even motives. Often, even basic assumptions in common were lacking. This could be the case in a whole gamut of situations from health to legal situations to welfare to immigration. In these situations, the status of the interpreter, interestingly, usually did not reflect the status of the dominant professional, but was often much closer to that of the client who did not speak the dominant language. In the overwhelming number of cases, the interpreter themselves was one of that particular language minority (for few of the dominant culture would know the languages of immigrant or indigenous groups) so that in many cases the interpreter would be specifically identified with the migrant or indigenous client.

Another factor important here was the basis of understanding or lack of understanding between the two parties over basic assumptions and orientations. Often an interpreter could be called upon to provide, or volunteer themselves, information of a supplementary, cultural kind that could help either party understand what was going on. For these reasons, the interpreter's work was rarely defined clearly as interpreting, but the role was often seen in terms of being a cultural intermediary as well. Thus arose various descriptions of interpreters – as 'contact' interpreters, or 'cultural' interpreters or whatever, to reflect this. In countries where there was already an established I/T profession for international purposes, this newer kind of interpreter was often defined as a 'marked' variety.

Given the diversity of languages that needed to be covered, the relative isolation of practitioners in different languages and the complex and divided institutional settings in which they operated, interpreters arose in specific language-based groups often without much contact with each other across languages. A clear and common professional identity was often lacking both for those using interpreters and for many interpreters themselves. Given also that interpreters typically evolved their role out of direct work situations, without necessarily having any training or professional preparation or accreditation, it was difficult for others to perceive them as professionals. In the vast majority of cases, professionalisation came after (often much after) interpreting practice was established and both those working with interpreters and interpreters themselves had already evolved their particular practices and *modus vivendi.* Even where interpreters or translators became freelancers serving perhaps a variety of institutions, these basic role relationships were maintained.

Given finally the overwhelmingly important place of public sector institutions for such interpreting, and the relative lack of a private market, this I/T situation could be largely described as institution-driven rather than profession-driven. Indeed, it would be possible to give a comprehensive account of such I/T work around the world with little reference at all to an I/T profession. The services-driven model of I/T, interestingly, needs I/T practitioners but not necessarily an established I/T profession. Often, of course, the established I/T profession for international conference interpreting and technical translation stood at a great distance from the I/T practitioners serving internal I/T needs. Interestingly however, diversity of languages is now affecting not only those interpreting largely for immigrants in host countries, but also affects conference interpreting and interpreting for business delegations or the like; many conference interpreters will now work alongside colleagues working in languages that were rarely used in international gatherings a decade ago.

Schematically, the relation between a profession and the provision of I/T services can be seen to be quite independent of each other:

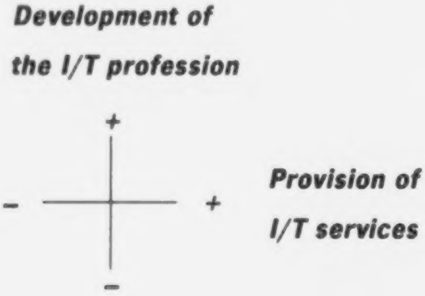

Figure 2. Possible relation between profession and services in I/T

The top-left hand quadrant represents a situation in which there is a strongly established I/T profession, but no provision or only ad hoc provision of internal I/T services by public authorities or private enterprise. This was the typical situation until recently in many western European countries which identified interpreting with international conference interpreting, and provided few services for internal I/T needs. The bottom left-hand quadrant describes the situation where neither a profession exists and I/T services are also not provided; a situation increasingly rare throughout the world.

In the bottom right-hand quadrant, we have a situation that had developed in Australia until recently, and in very few other countries: where there was relatively strong provision of I/T services, on the generic language services or comprehensive model described above, but where there was no well developed profession either for international I/T or as a profession for local practitioners. *In extremis* this situation could obtain indefinitely where language services were well-developed and maintained but there was little international work and local practitioners were either not encouraged or did not take the initiative to establish themselves professionally.

The top right-hand quadrant represents the situation where there is both the provision of I/T services and there is a strong I/T profession, which could either be a situation of a strong international cadre, or a strong local profession or a profession that combines both international and local practitioners – a distinct possibility in future I/T practice, though a situation not immediately obtaining anywhere. The elaboration of common accreditation provision and other measures described in this study could however hasten this development.

When we turn to individual examples from a number of countries in Section 3, we will see the diversity of professional situations that has come with the development of I/T services.

• • •

In this opening chapter we have set out some of the historical developments of I/T in relation to local needs of communication in multilingual societies. Three crucial parameters have been established to help to understand these processes:

- the issue of provision of I/T services, linked strongly to a society's and individual institutions' ideologies and orientations to their multilingual populations
- the understanding of the interpreter's and translator's role and function in these contexts by all parties involved
- related issues of professionalism and relations with other I/T practitioners in a diverse field.

On this basis we now look at the specific development of I/T in Australia, before returning to global issues.

SECTION 1

History and structure of the Interpreting/Translating field in Australia

Chapter 2

Interpreting/Translating and the historical basis of Australian language policy

In order to understand the development of I/T in Australia, some brief reference must be made to the history of language policy and social policy generally in this country.

Before white settlement in 1788, Australia was a multilingual continent; the number of Aboriginal languages has been estimated at around 250 distinct languages for an estimated population of 300,000, though both these figures are subject to considerable debate by scholars (Dixon 1980; Walsh 1991). Unlike New Zealand, where there was one indigenous Maori language, the languages of Australia and the nearby Torres Strait Islands were extremely diverse. Language groups were small (the largest having only a few thousand speakers), but the population itself tended to be multilingual, as a result of movement and intermarriage and varying relations between different groups. This degree of individual multilingualism meant that interpreting would have been rare in these situations.

This scene radically changed with the arrival of white settlers in the late 18th Century. With attitudes typical of European colonialists, local languages were seen as primitive and as not worth learning by the settlers, and few in fact made any attempt to learn them. Settlers and their political leaders were instructed to develop good relations with the natives and, although this was rarely monitored, there were attempts to establish communication. The first Aboriginal to become known in white society, Bennelong, came from the Aboriginal population around Sydney, was fluent in several Aboriginal languages and developed competence in English, becoming a very highly valued interpreter for the colonial administration. Bennelong is regarded as the 'first' Australian interpreter. However, as settlement reached further into the Australian outback, there was often open hostility between settlers and Aborigines, with little regard for language or indeed communication of any form. As white settlements reached out over the whole continent through the 19th and early 20th centuries, the need to speak Aboriginal languages was restricted almost entirely to police work on the one hand, and to missionary work on the other. We shall return to attitudes towards the use of Aboriginal languages in these contexts.

The growing white settlement of Australia was overwhelmingly British and Irish in its first phase, but the gold rushes of the 1850s and later brought to Australia significant numbers of either short-term or long-term settlers from other countries. While relations among European gold miners and settlers were generally good, there was extreme hostility towards Asians, particularly Chinese miners, whose distinctive culture and language, and whose generally non-European and non-Australian work practices were abhorrent to white settlers. This reaction initiated the move for a White Australia, which was eventually enshrined in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, the first legislation considered by the new Australian federal parliament. For much of this century, the White Australia Policy was also one of the few things known about Australia by people overseas.

Michael Clyne, Australia's most prolific writer on language policy, records that as Australian nationalism developed in the late 19th and earlier 20th century, this brought with it a growing degree of antagonism to other languages and cultures in the new federated Australia. With non-whites effectively excluded, some degree of attention turned towards other non-British groups in Australia. Apart from the gold rushes, significant numbers of Europeans had come to settle in Australia, usually in rural locations – large numbers of German speakers, for example, throughout the 19th century, and in the early 20th century some numbers of Italians. Individual incidents towards these groups revealed the harsher attitudes obtaining at this time. This hostility culminated in the severe measures taken against German groups during World War I. The Germans had established an extensive network of bilingual schools, newspapers and community organisations throughout their settlements. With the commencement of hostilities however this was seen as an enemy culture and, for that matter, an enemy language: all German educational and social organisations were abolished. Similar harsh attitudes were evinced towards Italians in World War II. The view of Australia during this time was that immigrants must assimilate, and assimilation meant giving up, or retaining in only a purely private way, the language and culture of one's origins. Australian national identity was based on being white and virtually, on being monolingual (Clyne 1991a, b).

The resulting policies meant there was little encouragement of learning other languages or learning about other cultures. French, Latin and (except in war-time) German were the only languages taught in Australian secondary schools, and taught more for intellectual rigour than for communication purposes. There was active regulation of language maintenance institutions: for example, foreign language publication such as newspapers were tightly controlled in Australia under War Precautions legislation in the 1930s. There was also scant interest in the languages or cultures of Asia: the White Australia policy ensured almost no domestic contact with people from this region, and there was little interest in communication, though some trade did develop before World War II. Australia by World War II was proudly identifying itself as '98% British'. Writing in another context, this author was moved to comment that 'Australia at the end of World War II seemed a most unlikely place for innovations in language policy' (Ozolins 1993:2).

The subsequent enormous changes that we have witnessed in Australian language policy and social attitudes, and the considerable developments in the area of Interpreting/ Translating, stem largely from the particular form that post-war Australian immigration policy took. The initially unexpected outcome of that program – the bringing to Australia of very significant numbers of non-English speakers – would eventually turn Australia from one of the most monolingual countries in the world to one of the notable innovators in language policy and language services.

Post-war immigration

The origins of Australia's post-war immigration policy have been well-covered in other studies (Jupp 1966, 1988, 1995; Martin 1978; Birrell & Birrell 1987). Australia desired a larger population for a number of reasons: for reasons of defence (having barely survived the Japanese onslaught of World War II); for reasons of building import-replacement industries (to avoid the heavy reliance on imports and consequent threat to shipping lanes in wartime); and finally for simple population reasons: the long economic depression of the 1930s had seen a diminution of immigration and a diminution of the natural birth-rate, threatening Australia with an incipient population decline in the decades after World War II. An ambitious immigration program under the first Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, was planned.

Calwell expected most immigrants would come, as traditionally, from the United Kingdom, but he had little shipping with which to bring immigrants, and found Britain uninterested in helping Australia in this matter. Other European countries also showed little enthusiasm for helping Australia, but Calwell was constantly referred to the large numbers of Eastern European refugees or 'Displaced Persons' [DPs] then in camps largely in West Germany. From 1945 to 1947 Calwell hoped to get enough British migrants. He agreed Australia would need to take some Displaced Persons (Australia at the time was an active founding member of the United Nations and was keen to become a good international citizen), but in a major address in Parliament in 1946 he announced that 'for every foreign migrant there will be ten people from the United Kingdom' (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, v.189, p.508, 22.11.46). Yet this was not to be the case. By 1947, frustrated at the unavailability of British immigrants, and with the promise of shipping from the International Refugee Organisation [IRO], Calwell agreed to take the first shiploads of DPs. Mindful of prior hostile Australian attitudes towards foreigners, Calwell and his staff planned this exercise carefully, and laid down some guidelines for settlement policies that have continued to be important in Australia.

Australia regarded its relationship with these aliens as basically a contract, with obligations on both sides. For these first DPs, it was indeed a formal contract: each DP who was given free passage to Australia signed in return a 2-year work contract, agreeing to work where directed for this period of time. This arrangement ensured that immigrant workers were directed to areas of greatest labour need and would not compete with Australian workers for jobs, thus calming trade union fears of importing foreign cheap workers. In return, Australia would pay their passage and accommodate them in Migrant Reception Centres until work was found. Australia saw these immigrants as a

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permanent addition to the population (Australia has never had a guest-worker program) and so assimilation was the desired goal. Scattering them to work all over the country would assist in this assimilation. Citizenship was available after 5 years' residence and acquiring a command of English.

Yet Calwell also recognised that if assimilation was the goal, this would not come automatically. The basis of Calwell's approach was the view that, *if the government deliberately brought non-English speaking background [NESB] immigrants to Australia, it must take responsibility for this, and provide them with the means to assimilate and the services to make their settlement effective in Australia.* This principle has basically guided Australian policy towards settlement since then. It contrasts with the policy of many other immigrant countries where there has been no such recognition of obligation on the part of government, or such recognition has come only after protracted struggle.

The policy of assimilation was thus not one of laissez-faire or an ignoring of the migrants: much was done to specifically scatter the migrants, teach them English, and to get them to see the usefulness of assimilation. Yet this policy was not directed at the migrants alone. Along with the immigration program came a massive propaganda campaign to convince Australians to accept these 'New Australians': Good Neighbour Councils were set up by local citizen groups to welcome migrants, and an annual Citizenship Convention was held around Australia Day each year in Canberra as a public forum to mark the success of immigration and assimilation.

Language services were not explicitly planned for in this immigration system. Interpreters usually in German were used in DP selection, as few Australian officials sent abroad to select DPs knew other languages. Given the prevailing view that assimilation was intended to be rapid, it was considered that the emphasis of the program in terms of language policy should be the teaching of English, so interpreting and translating were seen as temporary measures only. English was taught to the migrants on board ships coming to Australia, in the Migrant Reception Centres, later in continuation classes in major centres, on radio programs and through home tutor schemes. However, right from the beginning, certain DPs who had English skills worked as interpreters in the Migrant Reception Centres and sometimes elsewhere.

The eventual widespread need for language services however was to be quickly revealed with the next phase of immigration. After all the careful planning of Calwell, the DP program had proved to be a tremendous success, particularly among employers. The DPs had arrived at a time of acute labour shortage, and had an immediate impact on the Australian economy in areas as diverse as agriculture, construction, transport and communications, energy projects and new import-replacement industries such as motor car manufacturing. Eventually some 170,000 DPs came and found ready employment, beginning Australia's long post-war thirst for migrants. As the refugee camps emptied by 1951, Australia quickly signed immigration agreements with a number of countries, beginning the next large wave of Mediterranean immigration – from Italy and Malta in the 1950s, from Greece and Yugoslavia and later Turkey and the Middle East in the 1960s. Immigrants also came from western European countries (eg Holland, Germany) and from Britain, but the pattern of large NESB migrant intakes was established, and would last until the 1970s.

From the economic downturn of the mid 1970s, Australia stopped actively recruiting immigrants and made its immigrant intake far more selective, but strong refugee and family reunion numbers have continued to bring a culturally and linguistically diverse population to Australia. Rather than a European dominant intake, Australia's immigrants since the mid 1970s have come from a diverse sources, particularly Asia and the middle East and now also from Africa.

The evolution of language services

Language services were seen to be *ad hoc* and essentially transient in the DP program, governed by its ideology of dispersal and assimilation. Yet by the early 1950s certain Australian institutions were beginning to feel the impact of large concentrations of non-English speaking background [NESB] migrants, and *ad hoc* measures were taken by health, welfare, police and other institutions to handle communication needs. The best single account of I/T in Australia at this time is contained in Jean Martin's by now classic study *The Migrant Presence* (1978), which looks at the dawning consciousness of the need for I/T services among government bodies and service providers. Martin argues that the initial orientation of Australian institutions was basically one of avoidance and denial; communication problems tended to be blamed on the migrant, and their peculiar pattern of illness or deviance or other marked behaviour blamed on them as well. Yet Martin also documents the considerable steps that were taken by individual practitioners, sometimes supported by decision-makers but sometimes relatively unsupported, to found some kind of language service. In major hospitals or welfare centres, interpreters emerged generally from the increasingly multinational and multilingual workforce to practice interpreting: in some cases this became defined as their major task; in others it was combined with their primary duties. This emergence was seldom planned by the institutions and was always a result of exasperation at sheer weight of numbers of NESB cases, but it established a fledgling interpreter cadre that would literally 'invent' interpreting in Australia. The volume of work also led to the establishment of a Translation Unit within the Department of Immigration in 1960 to cater for settlement documents and multilingual correspondence.

It is important to see that these moves did not arise with a clear-cut view of the interpreters or translators as a profession or as a clearly defined occupation. Arrangements made included the widespread use of domestic staff to interpret or do other liaison work with NESB clients. Certain staff began to be used to communicate with clients, but only in some cases could their work be classed as interpreting – bilingual liaison of many kinds was equally common. Most institutions accepted and indeed expected family members or friends to interpret. Some institutions such as major hospitals did specifically appoint interpreters, and police were careful to draw up lists of trusted interpreters. Other approaches reflected both adhocery and remarkable imagination, for example the use of taxi services: with many taxi drivers themselves migrants, a hospital for example when needing interpreting services, particularly out of hours, could 'hire' a taxi driver of the right language background, who would turn on his meter, come in and interpret, and be paid by the hospital. While all practices may not have reached this level of inventiveness, they all attested to the unmet need in language services that was growing strongly by the late 1960s, when more formal attention was given to interpreting needs.

Interpreting at this time however lacked a clear definition of practice or occupational role, and interpreters often revealed marked differences in practice. The occupation of interpreter was being invented with few clear guidelines as to what the role of the interpreter should be: there were variations in the expectations of many clients, and in the performance of interpreters themselves. Some saw their role to be the medium of communication between two parties; others saw themselves as being principally there to assist their migrant clients. As concern for social disadvantage overall – and in relation to migrants in particular – increased in the 1960s, concerns for advocacy of migrants' rights were also slowly intertwined into some interpreters' understanding of their role. Some interpreters saw it as an important duty to explain to migrant clients many things besides what was being communicated by the other party; each area of police work, medical, legal, found different understandings of what their role should be. Some professionals found it useful to cultivate interpreters to bring in clients of that language group. Powerful institutional forces, the relative powerlessness of interpreters and migrant clients, and a changing but always confusing ideology of assimilation and integration were the determinants of interpreter practice.

The situation described here resulted in concerns only rarely being expressed over issues such as adequacy of service provision and standards. The ideology of assimilation that prevailed from the 1950s to the 1960s meant these problems were regarded as being merely temporary: soon the migrants will assimilate and learn English. By the mid-1960s however, concern for structural discrimination and migrant disadvantage began to be expressed, and it was becoming clearer that the language issue was a permanent one.

Issues in I/T need to be seen in the context of overall immigration and settlement policies of this period. After the unquestioned certainties of assimilation policy in the 1950s, the mid to late 1960s saw a far more critical edge to social issues, among them immigration issues. This was the era of wider social concern on issues as wide-ranging as conscription, Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, and educational and social disadvantage. Immigrants, considered to be assimilable and unproblematic in the 1950s now came to be redefined in terms of some social problems and some degree of social disadvantage. Martin categorizes this period of response to migrant issues as the period of responding to 'the migrant as problem'. Billy Snedden, Minister for Immigration from 1966 to 1969, moved government rhetoric away from *assimilation* to *integration*, and ushered in many reforms in settlement, including an expanded role for immigrant communities themselves in welfare and service provision, a new emphasis on recognising overseas profession qualifications, by establishing the Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications [COPQ], and concerning himself with issues of child migrant education and language services. Martin argues that Snedden's department was extremely ill-equipped to know about issues in relation to the education of migrant children, but in the area of language services, in response to Snedden's prodding, there was an interest in providing an interpreting service that would be generally accessible and emulate the Translation Unit in being a general facility for both the Department and the community. In the years after Snedden departed the Department of Immigration conducted some pathbreaking survey of I/T need, discovering that such need was widely felt across Australian institutions but that most institutions had only been able to respond to the needs in totally *ad hoc* ways. We will return to the significant contribution of the Department of Immigration in the following chapter.

Language issues also came to be identified in a number of other important institutions in Australian life at this time. Developments in I/T came together with other initiatives in relation to Languages other than English: throughout the 1970s, in areas as diverse as education, industrial relations, welfare and public administration, previous perspectives suspicious of LOTEs and their use in Australia rapidly gave way to newer perspectives stressing language diversity, the positive consequences of language maintenance, and institutional responsibility for communication with NESB migrants. For example, after a series of industrial disputes involving migrant workers, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for the first time issued crucial determinations in a variety of community languages to ensure effective communication with all parties to the disputes. In 1976 the Public Service Board introduced for federal officers in public contact work the Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance [LAPA], which provided a material incentive to bilingual officers to use their LOTEs in their official duties (Ozolins 1993).

Martin describes the process by which change started to slowly occur in language services, for example when the NSW Association of Mental Health in the 1960s began to publicize the inadequacies of interpreter services in mental health. The association's representative as a lone voice twice in the 1960s raised this issue, without response, at the Citizen Conventions. It was not until the early 1970s that other bodies began to focus on interpreting needs, most notably the Department of Immigration, the Australian Council of Social Services [ACOSS] and in a more scattered way, various individuals within health and welfare settings. In 1973, the Department of Immigration Task Forces around the country commented on the inadequacy of interpreter services in most institutions, and the dangers this situation posed. The Department of Immigration released a report on interpreting needs in 1973, giving the first national estimate of needs, which assisted in planning the Department's Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service, discussed further below (Australia. Department of Immigration 1973). In 1974 ACOSS, through its subcommittee on interpreting, released its report detailing specific areas of need for interpreters in the health and welfare sectors, and argued for a planned approach to meeting them (Martin 1978).

In the same year, a committee of COPQ looked at accreditation needs in I/T and prepared a multitiered system of accreditation levels to organise the I/T field, which eventually resulted in the accreditation system now extant in Australia, conducted by the National Accreditation Authority for Interpreters and Translators [NAATI].

Despite the increase in awareness and services in the 1970s, Martin records there was still considerable reluctance in some circles to attend to communication needs with migrants, and often considerable complacency about providing interpreting services of an adequate standard,

> as illustrated by a comment from the Victorian Health Minister on a campaign carried out during 1976 and 1977, to force the State Government to provide interpreters in Mental Health Authority [MHA] institutions. The Minister was reported as stating that there was 'nothing wrong' with relatives, children, domestic staff and other patients being used as interpreters, adding his own keen observation that "All these things are aimed at the lack of interpreters in MHA institutions... There's nothing fresh about that. Various groups have been pushing it for some time. I think there is an urgent need for interpreters, but it isn't as if they have no interpreter services at all". (Martin 1978:171).

Hard on the heels of such views, in 1978, the NSW Association of Mental Health conducted a survey of 28 Sydney hospitals and their use of interpreters, finding only a few with specific interpreter positions, and all except two hospitals relying heavily upon their domestic, clerical and medical and paramedical staff for interpreting.

Despite such situations, significant progress was made on a number of fronts in the 1970s, particularly in terms of establishing language services, and attending to the issues of quality of provision, which we examine in detail in the next two chapters.

I/T and language policy

In placing I/T and language services within their broader societal context in Australia, we have stressed their links to post-war immigration. It is important to appreciate however that attitudes towards immigration and in particular NESB and non-white immigration have changed rapidly in Australia over the decades. If the 1950s and 1960s saw attempts to define assimilation and assume its success and inevitability, by the early 1970s previously assimilationist attitudes to languages began to undergo a slow change on many fronts.

In education, there was a revaluation of the place of immigrants' or Aborigines' first languages in relation to learning English: rather than a view that the first languages hindered the acquisition of English and needed to be forgotten, an alternative view slowly gained ground that stressed the importance of gaining literacy in one's first language and the importance of language maintenance. Needless to say, communities speaking other languages had long run their own language maintenance institutions, particularly after-hours schools, often despite official disapproval. Schools began more often now to introduce immigrant languages into their curriculum, a movement that spread rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, and today provides the opportunity to take a vast array of languages as school subjects, up to and including final school examinations. In 1975 a committee was set up by the federal government to look at the place of migrant languages in Australian schools, which reported back in 1976 and proposed the expanded teaching of languages in schools, particularly primary schools, and closer links between the mainstream school system and ethnic schools run by ethnic communities for language maintenance (Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools 1976). Bilingual education attempts were begun, the first being in Aboriginal languages in the mid 1970s.

Within English teaching, the arrangements that came with the post-war immigration program, as earlier indicated, were for English teaching to be provided for adults, but that there needed to be no special provision for migrant children, who would be assimilated by the Australian school. By the late 1960s however there was a widespread realisation that the this earlier assimilationist model of young pupils 'naturally' picking up English from their classmates and playmates was no longer working, with so many NESB children in schools. A Child Migrant Education Program [CMEP] was introduced in 1970 to provide English as a Second Language instruction in mainstream schools, and paving the way for an ESL profession to develop in subsequent decades.

Coordination became the key concept in the late 1970s as links were increasingly drawn between a wide constellation of language issues, with various programs and initiatives covering areas as diverse as immigrant languages, languages in education, Asian languages, Aboriginal languages, English, languages in public life (eg the media, racism and sexism in languages etc), languages of the deaf, language and Australia's external relations, language and disability, and language services. Representing these interests, a broad coalition of language professionals, user groups, government departments, language services and concerned community groups mounted an increasingly coordinated campaign aimed at getting the federal government in particular to place language policy on its agenda (Ozolins 1993).

The pressure was rewarded when in 1982 the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts adopted a reference to look at a coordinated language policy. It received several hundred submissions and attracted a deal of media interest in its work, finally producing a report in 1984 *A National Language Policy* (Australia. Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, 1984)

Besides making numerous recommendations, the Senate Committee report stipulated four principles that have continued, through various reformulations and refinements, to have an enduring influence on the shaping of Australia's future language policies. These four principles were

- competence in English;
- maintenance and development of languages other than English;
- provision of services in languages other than English
- opportunities for learning second languages. (Ibid: 16)

The Senate report was a document whose breadth and scope was difficult for the government to respond to at once; after some indecision it handed over this issue to the Department of Education, who commissioned a further report, written by Joseph Lo Bianco, released in 1987 under the title of *National Policy on Languages* (Australia. Department of Education, Lo Bianco, 1987). This report was formally adopted by the government, and funds started to flow, largely for language education projects. Funding was also provided to establish a National Languages

Institute of Australia [NLIA] in 1990, which *inter alia* as part of its support to language professions provided accommodation for AUSIT, the national professional body for I/T, dealt with more fully below. Language policy was overseen by an Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education [AACLAME]. Some research money also started to flow for I/T work.

The next stage of language policy in 1991 saw the adoption of an Australian Language and Literacy Policy, a renaming of the NLIA to become the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia [NLLIA], and a heightened battle to keep various language initiatives afloat in an atmosphere of tighter government budgets and growing economic rationalist perspectives (Djite 1994).

It would be wrong to suppose that the issue for I/T was the dominant or among the most significant areas of language policy; language education has clearly been the primary influence here, and this has seen some strong developments particularly at the State level as all State governments have committed themselves to greater language teaching in schools. Nevertheless, the policy plank relating to language services was maintained in policy documents, and developments in I/T were thus intimately linked with other language policy developments at this time, particularly in the public sector. While I/T was a relatively minor aspect of these later reports on language policy, the Lo Bianco report stressed the importance of professionalisation in I/T, and used I/T as an exemplar for demonstrating the importance to Australia of language as a resource, arguing that I/T should be seen not as an adjunct to the welfare system but as a general aspect of service delivery in a multicultural society, a resource to the community and of importance in overseas relations.

Thus, not only are the developments in I/T in Australia of broader interest in providing a leading model of language services and I/T provision; but this has come in a particular context of wider aspects of language policy, many related to immigrant languages and to other aspects of language in Australian life.

The private market in I/T

While so far we have concentrated on public sector response to the migrant presence and communication needs, this was also an issue for private sector agencies. A description of the private market in I/T at this time is more difficult to present. While developments in public sector language services can be readily gleaned from public records, there is almost no record of this private market except as individual experience and, often, anecdote. Two main lines of development however can be traced. The first was the advent of some strong agencies establishing themselves in this still relatively small field. The second was the continued persistence of private individuals providing services, often of an ephemeral kind.

The evolving I/T agencies concentrated on particular areas of the market, and in some cases were able to expand beyond the small business framework into sizeable operations. Most, however, remained relatively small. These agencies concentrated on niche areas of the market that could sustain private payments – in the beginning, this was almost exclusively legal and medico-legal work, attuned largely to Australia's then workers compensation system related to workplace injuries, an area viewed as one of torts and the subject of private litigation between worker and insurer. With Australia's migrants being disproportionately represented in industrial work and in often the heaviest and most dangerous work, many such workers were injured and needed to go down the tortuous path of legal action for redress. From this, some agencies expanded into wider legal work, often by having established good working relationships with particular legal firms. Police work was also sometimes available, with the police particularly anxious to find reliable interpreters for their interviewing, and often relying upon a particular agency and its reputation to provide interpreters. Agencies such as Manier's or Rouel's in Melbourne, or Associated Translators and Linguists in NSW gained strong reputations that ensured a steady market. In some cases such agencies developed their I/T work as an offspring of their other language work – Rouel's for instance, was previously a private language teaching school, while others provided other services for migrants such as help with taxation or accountancy. Some developed as I/T agencies alone. The stability of some agencies meant that a number of freelance practitioners attached to the agency could be guaranteed a steady flow of work, and a cadre of freelancers having a full-time commitment to the field steadily grew throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Only a few agencies employed any appreciable number of practitioners as full-time on salary; the more common relationship was one of freelance contractors.

Court interpreting work as it affected the private area developed in slightly different ways in various states. In

NSW and SA, courts appointed official court interpreters to interpret during a case where NESB accused or witnesses were involved; in Victoria and other states, however, interpreters remained a party matter; in either case, before the advent of public sector services that began to cover at least some of these aspects of court work, private agencies were the providers for virtually all court work. In NSW a number of court interpreters formed an association – the Official Court Interpreters and Translators Association – to represent their interests. Generally, however, there were no established professional organisations for practitioners; some attempted professional organisations developed rather into I/T agencies.

The other, less organised side of the private market was simply provided by individuals working off their own resources, not attached to particular agencies but having an individual relationship to police, doctors, schools or other agencies needing interpreting work. Sometimes these practitioners evolved their professional practice from initially voluntary work or helping friends or relatives, then finding their language skills could bring monetary reward. In some cases there were reports of individuals dealing less than scrupulously: interpreters touting for clients from a particular ethnic group for particular lawyers, for example, or interpreters charging high prices of migrant clients for emergency work (TIS 1994: 4). Such practices, or reports of such practices, also influenced the eventual establishment of public sector services, in order to avoid exploitation.

A key aspect of the private field was the often ephemeral commitment of the practitioners to the field. While established agencies could and did provide continuing work to good practitioners, in many cases practitioners were those who saw I/T as a part-time commitment at best. Housewives, students, pensioners, those seeking other work but whose qualifications were not recognised, or who could not find work in their chosen sphere – this composition of the workforce meant that professional standards varied widely. In smaller languages, practitioners could not rely on steady work no matter how professional they intended their commitment to be.

In looking back at this slow invention and development of I/T in Australia, reference also needs to be made to the other field of private practice – the then already existing field of conference interpreting. This parallel stream of international conference interpreting existed, and continues to exist, with until recent years very little connection with the development of I/T for local needs in Australia. A good account of this international development and its relation to Australia is given in Anne Kerr's memoirs (1988): active as an international interpreter from the late 1940s, Kerr (then Anne Robson) was to become Australia's first and, at the time, only AIIC interpreter. She vividly describes the foundation of the small conference interpreting profession in the post-war years, tracing the burgeoning of the field over the next three decades.

In her professional work, Robson concentrated particularly on the Asian and Pacific regions, the scene of considerable diplomatic and other international activity in these decades. At this time, relatively few international conferences were held in Australia, and where they were the interpreting teams tended to be fully imported, with Robson usually being the only Australian practitioner. As the sole Australian representative also, she was particularly subject, in any work given her by the Australian government, to the penny-pinching attitudes towards her fees: 'the attitude, which persisted for a long time in Australia, that a conference interpreter was roughly comparable in value with a guide in the streets of Marseilles' (Ibid:226). On one notable occasion at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Committee meeting in Canberra in 1961, Robson was paid a lower fee by the Australian government than that paid to the imported interpreters doing the same work, which raised serious concerns for her in the eyes of the AIIC interpreters (she was aspiring to AIIC membership at the time), and as a result of her protests to External Affairs over the issue, she was not engaged by the Department for the next 18 months:

> What incensed me was not merely the prestige point involved, but the fact that it was my own government demoting me to inferior status because I was an Australian. The cultural cringe, in a diplomatic context, as recently as 1961! (Ibid:228).

Interestingly, in her book there is no mention of any interpreting in Australia apart from conference interpreting, nor any mention of interpreters not connected with the international scene. Her interpreting career ended in 1975 (she married the then Governor-General and became a public figure for reasons quite unassociated with interpreting), and her book perfectly marks the chasm that existed at the time between her profession and the mass of liaison interpreters working within Australia. From an international perspective, they were invisible.

Significantly, however, the issue of languages for diplomatic purposes has been a difficult one for Australia to come to grips with on many fronts, not only in relation to interpreting, and again reveals the enduring consequences of Australia's previously monolingual orientation. As Australia belatedly began to develop its own foreign policy independent of Britain from the mid 1930s (it established its own Department of External Affairs in 1935), it needed to develop its own diplomatic cadre and related positions particularly for trade and international relations generally. Yet particularly in its relations with the emerging Asian countries after World War II, Australia often lacked essential linguistic skills, nor was it always aware of interpreting issues even at this international level, as the treatment of Ann Robson shows. This whole question of language capacity was an issue that drew some political comment over several decades (Hall 1959, Australia, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 1979), leading the Department to devote considerable resources and time to language training. We return later in this report to look at the link between Australia's local and international I/T needs.

Auslan

The background to Auslan [Australian Sign Language] interpreting in Australia has been well outlined by Bridge (1995). A major struggle has been first of all to have Auslan recognised as a mother tongue of deaf people, and to combat earlier views of the undesirability or primitiveness of sign language, an attitude that still exists among some deaf people and rather more among those who have sought to educate deaf students. Historically, deafness has been viewed as a deficit, and a strong body of particularly educator opinion has been opposed to sign language in favour of promoting oracy among the deaf. The post-war era has brought considerable change to this situation, with contestation of earlier medical models, greater diversity of approaches both to education of the deaf and to their wider communication needs, an increasingly sophisticated linguistic appreciation of deaf communication, and a growing assertiveness on the part of deaf communities themselves. Much inspiration here was drawn from other advances in recognising sign language in other parts of the world, for example the United States, and moves both to have sign language taught as a mother tongue and for sign language interpreting to be recognised. The place of Auslan has been central in these changes, with increasing elaboration of this code, greater teaching of it to the deaf, and considerable language standardisation work that has now resulted in extensive materials developments, dictionaries etc for this language.

Increasingly, too, Auslan is being recognised at all levels of language policy, for example in the Senate report on language policy (1984) and the Lo Bianco report (Australia. Department of Education. Lo Bianco 1987). Moreover, this recognition comes along with the deaf community beginning to redefine and assert its own identity – moving away from a model of disability or deficit, to seeing itself as a cultural group, with its own language, culture and institutions.

Yet although such a redefinition of the deaf community is slowly bringing a sea-change of their identification and self-identification, Auslan as a language still faces an uphill battle for recognition and to develop consistently and strongly in its own community. Not least here are still unresolved issues of Auslan as a fully understood code, relations between Auslan and finger-spelling and Signed English and other codes, and in particular a host of educational issues of the adequacy of teaching of Auslan, and the adequacy of training of Auslan interpreters.

Auslan interpreting was begun by a few pioneers in the different states, providing services only from the 1960s, gradually increasing their salience as more situations developed of contact between mainstream institutions and the deaf in the 1970s, by which time the first organised interpreting services through the Deaf Societies were running, and the first tentative contacts were made between Auslan interpreters and those in other languages and language services.

In relation to the domains of interpreting in Australia, Auslan provision involves some radically different domains to those usually serviced by spoken language. One of the largest of these domains is the education area, where deaf students are increasingly gaining access to upper secondary and higher education, in line with mainstreaming of education for deaf children. This has increased demand both for note-takers – for following lectures and classes en masse – and for interpreters, to allow deaf students to participate in the educational process by sharing in class discussions, class presentations and practical work. The increasing number of deaf students now puts enormous pressure on Deaf Societies and education authorities to provide adequate numbers of note-takers and interpreters. Research into current provision and future needs here is urgently needed, and the present author is currently undertaking a study of Auslan interpreting policy.

The other domain that is a source of a good deal of work for Auslan interpreters can be generally defined as the social domain – weddings, funerals, anniversaries, sport meetings and so on – a whole host of social encounters which would rarely have spoken language interpreting provided but which will often involve Auslan interpreters, and involve Auslan interpreters in an even wider range of roles and social connections than spoken language interpreters would typically be involved in.

Historically, as we shall see, Auslan interpreting has come to be part of the structures of Australian I/T accreditation, training and to some extent policy development, achieving through this a closer link to interpreting in spoken languages than sign language interpreting has in many other countries.

Indigenous languages

While we have placed most emphasis on immigration and the languages brought to Australia through immigration, a significant but in some ways more problematic area of language services in Australia has been in relation to indigenous languages. As with the languages of the deaf, issues in relation to Aboriginal languages for a very long period of time were seen to be entirely *sui generis*, and developments in I/T had little relevance to these languages until the late 1970s. As with Auslan, however, Aboriginal languages have now also become to a degree integrated into other language service structures, as we see in future chapters, but problems of adequacy of provision and an often radically separate policy context mean that many issues in Aboriginal languages are still often seen to be quite separate from other language and I/T issues in Australia.

Attempts to provide language services in Aboriginal languages have suffered from two distinct areas of difficulty. First, while some 30,000 Australians speak Aboriginal languages, or the different language family of Torres Strait Islander languages, the historical diversity of languages means that each Aboriginal language community is extremely small, often only a few hundred speakers, and it has always been difficult to find practitioners from among such a small language groups. However, it is not linguistic or professional features alone which bring about problems in this area. Far more influential overall is the issue of racism or older assimilationist attitudes that denigrate these languages as part of an overall denigration of Aboriginal culture or rights. These views of Aboriginal languages have deep historical roots in Australia. Despite the work of some anthropologists and linguists in the 19th century in recording and helping to preserve Aboriginal languages, generally these languages were seen to be of little worth. The need to establish communication in these languages existed only for specific purposes – most often police work or some welfare work. Such an approach was in turn linked to underlying assumptions of primitiveness and eventual inevitable extinction of Aborigines, which transmogrified slowly in the 20th century into a policy of assimilation for those capable of being accepted in white society, particularly children of mixed racial parentage who were often removed from their Aboriginal families by State welfare organisations and raised as white (Morgan 1980).

Inability of Aborigines to speak English was seen as a hindrance to assimilation, and in operational terms seen as a hindrance to police or welfare work. Ability in Aboriginal languages was seen as irrelevant or, in some cases, viewed with suspicion, especially if this ability was demonstrated by a white person. Such a situation is vividly demonstrated in the case of Arthur Strehlow, son of a white anthropologist who grew up among the Aranda (Arentje) people in central Australia and learned their language, later himself becoming a linguist, but also being involved in Aboriginal administration through becoming a patrol officer in the 1930s. In his biography of Strehlow, Ward McNally recounts Strehlow's unpleasant discovery of the attitude of others towards his language skills:

> Within three months of commencing work as Patrol Officer, Strehlow was disgusted to discover that his ability to speak Aranda fluently was working against him as far as white people were concerned. What Strehlow had regarded as his greatest asset for the job, most Territorians seemed to regard as a signal that he was biased toward the Aborigines. Soon such terms as 'boong-lover' and 'renegade white bastard' were being used in reference to him.
>
> 'This upset me', Strehlow said in retrospect, in 1977. 'I went into the job believing my ability to speak Aranda would help me get to the bottom of complaints more speedily than someone not able to speak or understand the language. For example, it would be very hard for an Aboriginal to lie convincingly to someone who knew the language and the characteristics of the people concerned in an investigation. Finding where the truth rested was what my job was all about, and all I was interested in. I simply couldn't understand the attitude of the white people, and I was disillusioned.' (McNally 1981: 57)

Police work remained the one significant area of public administration where concerns for communication were often foremost, but the distrust towards Aboriginal languages was such that interpreters were seldom used. Aboriginal informants were used but often not themselves fully trusted, and there were few whites who spoke any of the many Aboriginal languages. After World War II Strehlow was later involved in some significant cases where miscarriages of justices started to be noted and brought to official recognition *inter alia* on linguistic grounds, a significant involvement eventually of Australian linguists who despite the difficulties have continued the work of Strehlow in this field, as we shall see in Chapter 8.

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Policies have changed in relation to Aborigines and Aboriginal languages since World War II. At the macro level, Australia adopted a policy of assimilation towards Aborigines, already mentioned above, but increasingly the federal government asserted its constitutional responsibility for Aboriginal affairs, and finally there was much greater activism by Aboriginal groups themselves on a range of political, social and educational issues, including language issues.

A number of Aboriginal issues assumed new momentum in the 1970s. Questions of land rights gained the greatest prominence eventually, from small claims in the 1970s from isolated groups to landmark judgments by the High Court recognising native title in the 1990s. Education also became a contested area. In contrast to earlier attitudes to Aboriginal languages, shifts in educational thought resulted in Aboriginal languages being seen as essential to the educational process by the federal Department of Education in the 1970s, paving the way for some of Australia's first bilingual education programs in English and Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory and later elsewhere. Some Aboriginal groups eventually also took control of their own schools, with a philosophy of two-way education based on bilingualism. Aboriginal language issues became prominent in broader moves for language policy. As we shall see, these moves also affected Aboriginal I/T issues, with a move similar to that for Auslan to integrate accreditation, training and provision for Aboriginal I/T into I/T policy applying to other languages.

Chapter 3

Organised language services – Federal, State and private provision

The organisation of extensive public sector language services – and the invention of some particular forms of service – has been the most notable achievement in the I/T field in Australia. Together with innovations in accreditation and training (covered in the next chapter), they constitute what can be described as the Australian model of I/T provision. Jill Blewett, doyen of I/T educators in Australia, enthusiastically recounted the achievements of Australian I/T from the late 1970s to the late 1980s:

> Australia leads the world in the provision of community interpreting and translating services and in the regulation and training of interpreters and translators for that provision... in the culturally pluralist but English language dominated Australia of today, equal access to all services frequently for non native English speakers, demands the employment of bilingual professionals or the provision of interpreter/translator services, or both. (Blewett 1987:1)

Here we look particularly at the historical development of Telephone Interpreter Service [TIS] at the federal level, and State and private services which have provided the framework of I/T service provision to the present day. We also look at the development of private sector agencies.

The Department of Immigration and TIS

The Department of Immigration's [DI] link to I/T came as an unavoidable part of its servicing of migrant selection and settlement needs. This was however for the first few post-war decades a totally ad hoc arrangement: individual migrants were employed as interpreters or translators particularly at Migrant Reception Centres and sometimes to assist the DI's work with migrants in their city offices, but they had no formal place within the DI structure. Slightly different arrangements were made for interpreting and for translating.

For translating, the DI employed casual translators for its own needs of correspondence, the work being carried out initially in the Migrant Reception Centres. All other translation work of an official kind for the federal government was however handled by the Commonwealth Investigation Service from 1947 to 1958, underlining the government's desired total control over the immigration program and control over foreign languages in these early post-war immigration years. In 1958 the DI took over this function for all federal government departments and the Red Cross and in 1960 formalised this in establishing a Translation Unit. Apart from translation of documents for other government departments or the DI's own official needs, the bulk of the translation was of personal documents immigrants needed for settlement such as marriage documents, educational qualifications or employment records.

For interpreting, the casual interpreters used by the DI for its own work were increasingly called on during the 1950s and 1960s by other government departments for their dealings with migrant clients. As a result of this demand increasing, the Department conducted several surveys of its own interpreting functions and interpreting needs in the community over the 1950s and 1960s, the most important giving the Department a good indication of need as a basis for introducing a national interpreting system (Australia. Department of Immigration 1973).

The next phase of serious I/T provision and organisation involved the Department of Immigration working on two fronts. First, in the light of its own documented need for an interpreting service, it put in place what is perhaps the most original contribution to interpreting services in Australia with the establishment of the Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service [ETIS] in 1973. Second, in response to growing concerns over standards in the provision of I/T services, there were moves to provide standards and regulation in the field by establishing a national accreditation system, dealt with in the next chapter.

The Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service provided general access telephone interpreting, for the cost of a normal telephone call, and was particularly aimed at dealing with emergency situations, critical police or medical situations, accidents and life threatening cases. Importantly, the service was run on a 24 hours basis. Starting in Sydney and Melbourne with 8 languages, the service rapidly expanded in terms of number of languages, centres of operation and the variety of cases and situations dealt with. In line with the vast number of obviously non-emergency calls that came into the service, the name was changed to the Telephone Interpreter Service [TIS] within three months. From that time on, TIS has provided a national service, providing interpreting but also, because of the nature of many calls received, a multilingual referral and information service as well. To handle situations where an interpreter was needed in person, an on-site interpreting service was also introduced.

Originally, the service was established in the Department of Immigration, but when that Department was amalgamated with the Department of Labour in 1974, TIS was transferred to the Department of Social Security [DSS]. After further politicking over the place of TIS and the Department of Immigration, TIS returned to the newly created Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs [DIEA] in 1976, with DSS creating its own language services for interpreting and some limited translating.

The unique place of TIS among interpreting services has been maintained to the present time, and there are several aspects of TIS that deserve close attention. First, the technology of the telephone provided an innovative breakthrough in providing interpreting services. With all the inherent drawbacks of communication by telephone, it was nevertheless a most effective way of getting language services in situations where it might have been impossible to provide an interpreter in person, and a most efficient way of handling brief interpreting situations or multilingual information situations, where many calls crossed the interpreting/information boundary.

Secondly, TIS provides a national service of open access, and is the only language service organisation in Australia to be able to maintain such a national network. As well as its telephone work, the on-site facility extended the range of the organisation, making it the most visible of language services. Thirdly, and of critical importance for future policy issues, was that the TIS national network continued when other language services were set up by federal, state or other authorities throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with TIS often providing essential back-up – for example after hours, or where there was overflow work local agencies could not handle, or in languages not catered for elsewhere. This coexistence also meant that questions of overlap and demarcation, responsibility for different service areas and coordination of response to needs have been enduring policy issues.

Some description of TIS' structure and functions can be given here. TIS is a national system and has been organised on a federal basis. Initially located in Sydney and Melbourne, over the late 1970s and early 1980s it expanded to services in all State and Territory capitals, and larger regional centres. An important aspect of regionalisation was the opportunity to provide on-site services in diverse locations, as well as providing cheaper telephone interpreting for the cost of a local call. (Local telephone calls are not charged on a time basis in Australia). Eventually nation-wide telephone numbers were introduced to provide interpreting anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call, and there has subsequently been some rationalisation of telephone services for after-hours use: initially Sydney and Melbourne handled all calls after hours, now Melbourne office alone does so. Further rationalisations in service organisation have occurred in 1997-8, dealt with in Chapter 5.

The regional organisation of TIS also meant it worked in very different environments in different States or Territories: in some States (WA, Tasmania, Queensland) , they are virtually the only public sector I/T service; in others, there are a variety of State services, and in each case TIS has its own particular relations to these other services. These issues are discussed further below.

The most common form of organisation for telephone interpreting has been to have a core staff of on-duty interpreters in a specific TIS location covering the major languages needed at that centre, receiving calls, interpreting those in their languages, passing on calls in other languages to other duty interpreters in those languages, or contacting outside interpreters in other languages who would have the call transferred to them. Duty interpreters or operators would monitor such diverted calls, recording details of length, type of situation and language and specific interpreter information for payment for the outside interpreters. Gradually greater differentiation has occurred between tasks done by interpreters and tasks done by telephone operators, to ensure greater speed in response; now generally all calls are handled first by an operator who then diverts calls to interpreters as appropriate, with most interpreters being on-call and working from home or elsewhere rather than being at a central site. The current issues arising from this are again discussed further in Chapter 5.

Telephone interpreting was available to any caller. TIS was a free service, and its users were extremely diverse. While heavy use of TIS was made by many institutions (eg DSS, hospitals, Police, service providers of various kinds), many individuals also made use of it. Calls could be initiated by either the NESB or the English-speaking party; many calls involved hookups with other parties or a whole series of hookups. Many NESB callers called for information or referrals or with problems to be solved; in some cases multilingual information rather than interpreting was provided, making new demands of the interpreters on duty. Occasionally English language callers made use of TIS information services when other avenues proved fruitless. At the same time, most TIS work was devoted to interpreting work *per se*, with a proportion of emergency and highly critical cases. Police had a priority line to TIS. On-site bookings could be made by institutions or private professionals, not by NESB clients, and they covered the major interpreting situations in institutional and professional life: medical, legal, welfare, education etc.

TIS has been at all times a generalist service; as specialist services have developed in some States, TIS has tended to become a back-up service to these other services. Its generalist nature has meant that it has not been able to provide extensive training to its interpreters in particular fields. While there is some regional variation in this, as we shall see, TIS generally sees itself as a service-provider alone rather than a trainer. However, it has engaged in extensive education of users, seeing this as an important aspect of promoting its services. An important institutional imperative for TIS, arising from its place within the Immigration bureaucracy, is to cater for all languages of immigrants, including languages of very small or recently-arrived groups. This makes TIS very much the front-line of I/T in Australia, with a constant concern to recruit new interpreters for new language groups.

TIS was a free service and, until the move to cost-recovery in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was statutorily unable to receive payment for its services. It was unable to receive payment even from private professionals or companies who used TIS services from time to time for interpreting work through international hookups – a service provided by TIS on an ad hoc basis.This meant that all government or private users could receive a free service, but made TIS' charter virtually unlimited. Government support for settlement services for migrants guaranteed TIS an expanding budget to meet the demands placed upon it.

The greatest rethink of TIS and its relations with other language services came in the late 1980s/early 1990s with a series of policy shifts particularly in relation to cost-recovery, and a major consultancy on the possibility of combining all language services in Australia into a national language services facility (KPMG Peat Marwick 1990).

The issue of cost-recovery, while seemingly accepted now in the late 1990s, has had a stormy passage in language services over the last decade. TIS had originally been funded completely out of Department of Immigration funds, and provided as a free service to all callers. In the 1980s dissatisfaction with this arose on a number of grounds. Within TIS itself, the growing cost of the service and a statutory inability to charge for services led to concerns about its future. At the level of the Commonwealth government, since 1986 there has been an ongoing review of responsibilities for settlement services (Australia. Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services 1986). Part of this has involved a desire to distribute the cost of TIS language services to federal government departments and user bodies; a system of cost-recovery, and stipulation that all departments provide for language services from their budgets has been gradually implemented from the early 1990s. Furthermore, TIS also wanted a similar cost-recovery system with State agencies and indeed with all institutions, as well as private commercial users, a suggestion causing considerable turmoil and a degree of opposition particularly from the States.

On the one hand, such a demand for cost-recovery went hand in hand with other administrative reforms of this period, giving a greater transparency to costs incurred and shared by various agencies in the delivery of services. However, crucial points of consideration affected specifically language services. While the move to make government departments responsible for planning their own language service needs and their own spending on language services seems an eminently sensible spreading of responsibility, all too often in departments for whom contact with NESB clients is a low priority, language services could begin to be overlooked entirely, or cheaper alternatives explored, such as imposing limits on using TIS or other language services, or encouraging any means of communicating that does not involve paying interpreters, ie reverting to previous practices of using family, other staff etc. Some evidence of this was provided by the downturn in calls to TIS over 1991 -3 as the cost-recovery began to declare its effect, before recovering again. Without one strong central agency willing to provide a comprehensive language service (and the Department of Immigration has certainly been the most keen to take on this task), and being willing to work for the continued use of quality services, any move to 'mainstreaming' could mean a threat to standards of service painstakingly established over the last few decades.

The other issue of the early 1990s was the question as to whether one centralised agency – a National Language Services Bureau – operating throughout Australia could replace the myriad of federal, State and other public sector agencies to provide a comprehensive language service. Such a proposal came from an unusual promise made at the 1990 federal elections by the Hawke government to introduce such a centralised agency, one of the few times a specific proposal on language services have received a place in political party platforms. This arose from a wide-ranging consultancy on language services provided by KPMG Peat Marwick consultants, and from elaborate federal-state negotiations on this issue.

The bases for such a move were several: concerns at both State and federal levels about the increasing costliness of language services; concerns about overlap and perceived overlap among federal and State services; regard to the power of new technologies; concerns that only a large and comprehensive bureau could provide standards demanded; and concerns to set language services on a new footing not restricted by the previous welfare model of provision. It would be difficult to argue that the overriding concern driving the proposal was not the estimated savings in costs envisaged by centralisation; despite this, the whole exercise served to galvanise the whole I/T field, with considerable policy debate and a close look at all language services at all levels of government. While the debate over a single bureau eventually evaporated with the opposition of some States to the move, the issues raised by this proposal have continued to be important in contemporary thinking on language services in Australia and have continued to be argued by a number of bodies, and we return to these when looking at present issues both in TIS and in language services more broadly in future chapters.

Finally in relation to federal language services and TIS, a few words need to be said about the Department of Social Security [DSS]. Having been given TIS in 1974 and losing it again in 1976, DSS was determined to provide a language service for its own operations, and sought its own means to bring this about. Regional offices began to employ interpreters either as casual staff or in some cases as full-time employees. As the number of NESB staff in its own offices began to slowly grow, it was also one of the major departments encouraging its staff to receive the Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance [LAPA], the allowance for competence in a LOTE, so that officers could work directly with clients in other languages. Various DSS regional offices put varying emphasis on interpreters or bilingual officers, trialing different ways of coping with multilingual communication needs. In 1985, DSS established Migrant Services Units in most States *inter alia* to coordinate interpreters. A small translation unit was also established in Canberra as increasing use was made of multilingual brochures and information sheets. A Multilingual Information Service [MIS] by telephone was also established, which provided not interpreting but information on DSS benefits and procedures in a number of languages. Significantly, DSS also began to deal with language issues involved with its Aboriginal clientele, thus seeing its language commitment as not related to migrant clients alone. In line with other moves on language policy at the time, DSS became one of the first federal bureaucracies to adopt an explicit language policy, accepting multilingual communication as fundamental to its work of servicing clients.

Migrant Liaison Officers [MLOs] are employed by DSS to conduct liaison with migrant communities, and to spread information about DSS programs and innovations. These officers are seen as a group distinct from interpreters and are not used for interpreting. Interestingly, their role is also changing with the coming to Australia of a greater diversity of immigrant groups: while previously MLOs related to one specific community (and language skills were important in being able to relate to that community), now MLOs besides their 'own' community are often given a number of more newly settled communities to look after, even where they do not have that particular language. General community development and liaison skills are important here for the MLOs, not the knowledge of any particular language. One important function of the MLOs is, literally, to 'find the migrant' so that if needed they can be serviced by DSS. This has been a particular need interestingly enough in country areas, where continually MLOs find migrants unaware of services available. Their role is particularly important in relation to newer arrived communities who lack infrastructure, and to asylum-speakers who often find themselves very isolated while going through procedures of determination of refugee status.

A more detailed analysis of current language services in DSS and its recent successor Centrelink is provided in Chapter 5.

State level language services

While federal initiatives in language services were the most spectacular during the early-mid 1970s, the period of the late 1970s and especially the 1980s also saw considerable State initiatives in providing I/T services, in some cases in conjunction with the federal government (through grants or cost-sharing arrangements), in other cases through purely State funded initiatives. Again, Martin gives us a good overview of these developments up to 1978: in Victoria the Education Department led the way in organising the first specialist interpreter service in 1975, servicing school needs for communication with NESB parents and communities. In NSW, the impetus came with hospital interpreters, organised in 1977 as the Hospital Interpreter Program, providing a mobile force of 27 interpreters to serve 17 Sydney hospitals to replace previous largely ad hoc provision. As Martin interestingly points out, the advent of this service itself provided new problems for medical personnel who had grown accustomed to the ad hoc arrangements of the past: even from the first year of operation:

> ...it is already clear that doctors and other hospital staff also need training to use an interpreter service effectively and that a formal service can be opposed as a disruptive influence on informal arrangements that have developed within, and in congruence with, the traditional hospital hierarchy of authority and status. (Martin 1978:177)

In 1978, the landmark federal Galbally Report, the first comprehensive report on post-arrival services to migrants, detailed the by then well-known shortcomings of interpreter services and recommended the establishment of specialist services particularly for the areas of health and law (Australia. Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants 1978). As a result of its recommendations, and also arising from contemporaneous State moves through for example the establishment of Ethnic Affairs Commissions [EACs], there were several new initiatives taken.

While the Galbally report was the most important federal report in his area, in NSW in 1978 a State report *Participation* (NSW EAC 1978) was released by the newly created Ethnic Affairs Commission and detailed the response of the State government to a number of issues in ethnic affairs, including language services. The NSW EAC from this time on provided both interpreting and translating services, and the Hospital Interpreter Program steadily expanded, changing its name to the Health Care Interpreter Service [HCIS]. The NSW Health Department also established a unique Health Translation Service [HTS] which specialised in health translations, and whose translations were to gain a national reputation. In Victoria, which by now had hospital interpreters regularly employed in a large number of hospitals, a Central Health Interpreter Service [CHIS] was established to cover needs in the public health field not covered by the hospital interpreters, again on the model of a mobile force of interpreters able to serve a variety of institutions. Also in Victoria, as a result of local organising, a Mental Health Interpreter Service was established, and a small Interpreter Services Bureau was created to look after State departmental needs outside of those provided by the specialist services. From 1983 the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission expanded strongly into language services, creating a Legal Interpreting Service [LIS] for use by designated State legal bodies (eg police, legal aid), establishing a Translation Unit, and taking over and expanding the Interpreting Services Bureau to form the General Interpreting Service [GIS]. The South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission also provided language services, as on a very small scale did the NT and Queensland Offices of Ethnic Affairs.

The developments mentioned above, and the pivotal role of the Galbally Report, were part of broader changes in Australian society and institutions towards the migrant population, as reflected in the ideological shift from integration to multiculturalism in government rhetoric, and an attention to ethnic affairs issues by governments of most political persuasions. In terms of policy developments, these I/T initiatives came at the same time as striking developments in such areas as multilingual broadcasting in both radio and later television, especially through the creation of the Special Broadcasting Service [SBS] which commenced operation in 1978, and greater emphasis on communicating with ethnic communities and tying ethnic affairs issues into mainstream politics. Within language policy more specifically, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw government interest in the learning of migrant languages in schools, the growth of Asian Studies and Asian language teaching, considerable developments in ESL, and finally the culmination of the long campaign to have language issues addressed more broadly in the move for a national policy on languages, as covered in the previous chapter.

I/T needs were thus only one aspect of a growing commitment to ethnic-affairs related and language-related issues on government agendas, and had to wait until these more propitious times to receive acknowledgment in their own right. Yet the struggle for adequate language services did not end there: while the new State specialist services were critical in meeting a good deal of interpreting need, they were even more successful in uncovering just how large the unmet need was in language services: all of these services expanded rapidly in the 1980s.

These State services had developed each in a way specific to their own State and the former arrangements that obtained there. In South Australia in 1975 for example, a State Government Interpreting/Translating service mainly servicing courts was established in the Attorney-General's Department, which had instituted the practice of appointing official court interpreters in South Australian courts (a practice followed in NSW but not in other States). The Service was after a few years moved to the Ethnic Affairs Branch of the Premier's Department, and then became part of the new Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1980, having grown to encompass other areas of State government work, finally consolidating within its structure all other State institutions including the previously separate hospital interpreters. It is now called the Interpreting and Translating Centre, and is part of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. Likewise, the NSW EAC services developed from a legal basis, through provision together with private agencies of official court interpreters, evolving after 1978 into a broadly based State agency covering interpreting in all areas except health (where the HCIS predominated), and providing a comprehensive translation service as well.

NSW shares with Victoria the situation of language services in health being relatively autonomous of other State language services. This relates partly to the size of the health systems, and partly to their fragmentation in that hospitals, various health centres, health areas and other structures have historically introduced their own various styles of language service. The consolidated model of South Australia where health I/T services are combined with non-health areas in one service has been felt to be impossible in a much larger State like NSW; indeed, the main task for NSW was to unite its health language services under one structure, HCIS, which meant initially gathering under one structure six regional structures reflecting the wider organisational structure of the Health Department. Only in recent years has the HCIS structure been truly united, with information and service delivery becoming completely coordinated and subject to monitoring. What has been revealed is a service of enormous volume: just over 200,000 interpreting situations each year are undertaken by the service. This makes HCIS by far the largest single on-site provider of interpreting services in Australia, now offering a 24-hour service for critical cases, with some telephone interpreting as well. Some HCIS interpreters are based in a single hospital, and other interpreters either full-time or sessional work peripatetically to meet need. Language services in NSW have thus been organised in two large structures: one service for health, and another for all State non-health matters.

By contrast, Victoria displayed the most complex set of arrangements for services, with a set of specialist State services covering a diverse field: by the end of the 1980s Victoria had developed the following State services:

- a Mental Health Interpreting Service [MHIS]
- an Education Interpreting Service [EIS]
- a Central Health Interpreting Service [CHIS]
- a Legal Interpreting Service [LIS]
- a General Interpreting Service [GIS]

Further, a number of other State-financed institutions (particularly hospitals) also had appointed interpreters.

A brief word can be said here on each service, some of which have retained their identity and functions and some of which have since been consolidated.

The Education Interpreting Service, already mentioned in the previous chapter, was Victoria's first dedicated interpreting service, founded to meet the situation of a huge influx of the children of NESB immigrants entering Victorian schools in the 1960s and 1970s. The service had a core of around 30 full-time interpreters, stationed in clusters in designated schools with a brief to travel where needed. Their main purpose was to interpret in school-parent interactions, and some undertook limited translation work as well. They were appointed as members of the School staff with normal education employment conditions. Two small translation units also developed out of Education Department work, producing a very large body of multilingual information materials and other translation work for the school system.

The Central Health Interpreter Service was funded initially with federal Galbally funds and commenced operations in 1980 (Solomou & Pappas 1989). It provides a peripatetic team of around 30 full-time and large numbers of sessional interpreters, who supplement interpreters employed by hospitals, community health centres or other health care agencies. Its particular advantage is being able to provide interpreters in a much wider range of languages than would be justified employing in any one health care agency. Its interpreters are mobile and attend specific appointments or are contracted on a sessional basis with particular agencies. They work mainly in the metropolitan area, with a limited reach into the country. CHIS also undertakes translations in the health area, and undertakes extensive user education programs. Unlike the NSW Health Care Interpreter Service, which covers all State health-based interpreters in one structure, CHIS complements the interpreters employed in individual hospitals or other health care agencies. It annually services over 20,000 interpreting appointments as well as undertaking medical translations.

The Mental Health Interpreter Service was also created in the late 1970s, as a result of the concerns in mental health already outlined. MHIS was a small service, with full-time interpreters in only three languages (Greek, Italian and Croatian/Serbian) and a number of carefully selected part-time interpreters. Its specialism rested in the particularly difficult and at times unpredictable demands of communication in the mental health area, where previously NESB patients had been often poorly diagnosed or treated, partly as a result of communication difficulties.

The Legal Interpreting Service was set up to provide a specialist service for State legal bodies, particularly the Police, Office of Corrections, Legal Aid and Attorney-General's Department, expanding its range of agencies serviced over time to include most State tribunals and legal-oriented bodies. It remains the only specialist legal interpreting body in Australia, though the Ethnic Affairs Commission services in both NSW and SA have a substantial legal orientation in their work. LIS was established in 1985 and brought one significant innovation to the I/T field – a Legal Orientation Course which gave intending legal interpreters an orientation of around 40 hours to the various aspects of the legal system they would encounter in their work. The course was intended as a specialist add-on course for those with Interpreting accreditation. Interpreters who had finished the course would be given preference in employment by LIS. A feature of LIS' organisation was provision in its infrastructure for training officers who conducted both the Legal Orientation Course and an intensive program of user education (eg with the Police training college, legal aid services, etc). LIS employs its interpreters on a sessional basis only. Its consistent user education and training activities have given it a strong profile in State legal circles.

Finally, the General Interpreting Service grew out of the previous Interpreter Services Bureau, established in the 1970s to deal with a range of State government functions from welfare to housing to motor licensing. It remained a general non-specialist catch-all service for the State government until its amalgamation as described below.

This was a much greater range of specialist services than in any other State, and coordination and rationalisation were key issues for the State government from the mid-1980s, as it wrestled with what State interpreting services should look like and what the best use of resources may be. Victoria is an instructive case in this regard as with time its system of specialised services in a number of different departments began to be called into question. With separate federal interpreting systems existing in TIS and DSS, there were no less than seven different interpreting services operating in the one State. Moreover, within the specifically State sector, four different departments controlled the various services. The Victorian government introduced an Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1983 on the NSW model. The EAC housed LIS, and also developed a Translation Unit which handled translation work for State agencies – at this time State agencies were expected to use the translation services of the EAC. After a series of reviews (Victoria. Language Services Policy Task Force 1987), a partial rationalisation of services brought the General Interpreting Services under the auspices of the EAC, and then in 1990-1 a more far-reaching rationalisation combined all State services into one new body – VITS [Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service]. However, in keeping with these services' previous high-profile activity in specialist fields, both MHIS and LIS retained their distinct identities. EIS and GIS however lost their identities and were amalgamated into general VITS provision. In an independent move, CHIS moved back to the Health Department and did not remain under the VITS umbrella: it had already been established as a corporate body with its own Board of Management, and industrial issues brought it back to Health. As a further step, VITS drastically reduced its number of full-time interpreters in its previous constituent services, particularly affecting former EIS, MHIS and GIS interpreters, finally by the mid-1990s relying totally upon sessional interpreters, though retaining some training capacity particularly for LIS.

Rationalisations of public language services

The reforms that in Victoria led to centralisation and corporatisation also liberalised the market for State language services. Similar to the course followed in several other States and partially at the federal level, Victoria moved from a position where free language services were provided for State agencies by a central State language service (or services), to one of first cost recovery, forcing greater responsibility for identifying language service needs upon individual State agencies, to finally a position where State agencies are free to buy their language services from any provider, with VITS needing to be competitive with other private or public providers.

This was a principled policy move and one which is important to consider as a general policy issue for language services. A number of concerns led to such a shift in policy. The most general was the questioning of what was the most efficient and cost-effective way of providing language services for State agencies. However, this question has always in Australia been very closely connected with the issue of adequacy of provision of services, and with State (and federal) government guarantees of providing adequate language services for their NESB constituents.

A number of issues arise in this context. One of the reasons for retaining strong language services at a State level (whether in Victoria or NSW or SA) is because it is felt a dedicated service will provide a much better focus of service than leaving it up to individual State agencies and departments, for many of whom language services may well be a low priority and may be forgotten if there is not strong championing of this cause. Totally leaving the field to private enterprise has also not been accepted by State or federal government because of concerns over quality of service provision, as well as the considerable bonds that have been built up between State language services and their traditional client agencies. For these reasons, the model followed has been to go through various stages of a three-step process, with the various State governments choosing how far they will go in this direction :

i) Attempting to consolidate language services in one central State agency (achieved totally in SA and achieved with the exception of health in NSW and Victoria)

ii) Obliging State departments and agencies to make financial provision for language services, instead of receiving these as free services from a central State language service. This has been done usually initially by a program of cost-recovery (as with federal TIS services), and by giving State departments and agencies dedicated resources to cover their language service needs, which they must spend with the State language services. State policies on access and equity or requirements to specifically report on servicing of ethnic clients serve as general monitoring features here.

iii) Moving to a situation where State departments and agencies make provision for language services out of their general budgets (monitored by the aforesaid access and service requirements), and subsequently are free to purchase their language services from any provider, public or private. This stage may include the tendering out of language services. The State language services may be corporatised and retain whatever share of the market they can in competition with other providers, as well as still attending to various State policy and monitoring issues.

All three States of Victoria, SA and NSW have moved substantially through these three stages, though with Victoria having most radically implemented this whole gamut of moves, and SA and NSW being less keen to totally move to the corporatised model and sever close links with Ethnic Affairs Commissions.

The policy issues here are very similar to the one faced at the federal level by TIS and by considerations of what is a preferred model of service delivery: centralising service provision in one agency brings charges of inefficiency, and of being too closely tied to immigration (federal) or ethnic affairs (State) concerns; on the other hand, there is considerable doubt over how well other federal or State departments or agencies would attend to language services and how well they would use them if they did not have a central public sector agency to rely upon, given that in their prime responsibilities language services would form a low priority. Clearly, immigration and ethnic affairs oriented departments have been the ones dedicated to building language services, and indeed are looked upon as such by other agencies. This issue is now a mature policy issue that all government bodies must address, and which is also of interest of course to the substantial private sector providers.

The private sector and expansion in the 1980s

The private market, described at some length in the previous chapter, has in some ways tended to contract and in other ways expand as the policy scene has changed rapidly over the past decade. In the 1980s, State services in particular expand, cutting into some areas which were previously regular clients of private agencies – such as the coming of the Legal Interpreter Service (1985) in Victoria which provided interpreters to a specified number of State legal institutions including courts. Active marketing by State services such as in NSW also drew some clients who had previously used private services, either in interpreting or translation. Certainly life has been difficult for many smaller agencies largely focused on workers compensation work and medico-legal work, not out of competition with State agencies but out of changing workers compensation procedures which have often lessened the number of adversarial interviews an injured worker must face, thus cutting down on the need for interpreting.

Yet despite this trend, and a few smaller companies folding, the private market has overall rapidly expanded in recent years, for two initially distinct but ultimately related reasons. First, a number of private agencies have worked hard to expand their clientele, either by specialising in higher quality translation work particularly in the business sector, or in a small number of cases by expanding into conference interpreting. Companies such as Tour Hosts in Sydney now have frequent conference work, using both the few AIIC interpreters in Australia, but also providing conference interpreters in a wider range of languages for conference needs in Australia and the region, and taking pains also to provide some training and guidance in languages in which conference interpreting has been rare. Melbourne's On-Call I/T agency has now created a conference interpreting subsidiary to concentrate on this area. Evolving technologies particularly of e-mail have now added an international dimension to the work of some companies focused on translation, enabling both tendering of international work, or recruiting some international practitioners for difficult to find languages in Australia; we return to these examples below.

The second source of expansion for the private sector however has stemmed directly from government polices, particularly policies to allow government departments to seek their language services from outside the public sector, a policy always *de facto* in place at the federal level, but becoming virtually universal for all State government bodies in the early 1990s. An increasing number of private agencies have taken advantage of this policy change. Processes of competitive tendering for particular public sector projects or for whole areas of work have begun to appear more frequently in the last few years, with private companies gaining the tenders in several cases.

An accompanying and general move has been for private agencies to upgrade their image not only to become more attractive to business clients, but on basic issues such as moving to using exclusively or almost all accredited practitioners, often advertising this. This has to some extent been a historical reversal of some previous attitudes where their was scepticism of the need to insist on accreditation of practitioners, favouring of experienced practitioners without accreditation and seeing accreditation as an academic or irrelevant exercise. Such views may still exist, but from an increasingly small range of agencies. Some measure of the winds of change here can be seen with the establishment in Melbourne in the early 1990s of one agency very pointedly calling itself 'All Graduates' – established by a graduate of then Victoria College, the name was chosen precisely to make the point that professional qualifications should be important for practitioners; the name often raises questions from clients and would-be practitioners who may not be used to thinking of interpreters or translators in these categories.

Some further examples of this new face of private agencies can briefly be mentioned:

- Ethnic Communications (Sydney) is an agency with an unusually public approach to private marketing. It sees the multilingual market in Sydney (and further afield) as an opportunity for language work at several levels: interpreting and translating, publication and typesetting and distribution, and marketing and consultancy services. Importantly, this agency has made the transition that the Lo Bianco report talked of – a transition from language services as welfare to one of normal service provision – and taken this one step further into the private arena to sell multilingualism as an important arm of business and overall marketing (not limiting itself by the way only to the Australian market). The company produces a widely disseminated newsletter and promotes ethnic business people with innovative approaches to business in Australia or overseas.
- South Australian Language services [SALS] in Adelaide is largely a translation agency dedicated to using the latest technologies in providing high quality and speedy translations, and spreading the gospel of technology as the essential tool of the professional translator (Hellander 1995). It demands e-mail of its contractors, uses off-shore practitioners in particular languages where none is available locally, and keeps its clients and practitioners connected through a regular newsletter which of course is delivered electronically.
- Associated Translators and Linguists (Sydney) has become a massive private operation, with over 10,000 assignments per year, matching some of the smaller State services in volume. It sees itself as providing a major

service for courts, medical situations, administrative interviews and conferences and business meetings. Translation is also provided for a diverse range of clients from government departments to major businesses, and this agency is unusual in regarding it as a necessity to have on its staff full-time practitioners who can work particularly on quality control, training and handling of complex projects.

In one sense, description of these agencies is simply a recounting of mature agencies of a kind that might be recognised anywhere in the world, particularly the sophisticated translation agencies that now abound internationally. On the other hand, it is important to stress that the basis for almost all agencies is still the day to day business of interpreting and translating for the needs of the local multilingual population in Australia, and for those who would service them or sell to them. In many cases now private agencies are challenging for work that was done previously by public sector language services; in other respects these private agencies that have survived and prospered have gone on to develop other markets as well. With government services also now often looking for a more entrepreneurial role, this is a period of rapidly changing and developing relations between sectors and between agencies, which is examined further in Section 2 of this study.

Chapter 4

A national accreditation system

If TIS was a bold experiment in establishing a national interpreting network, equally bold in many ways was the attempt to create national standards and a system of accreditation for interpreters. This was the second major influence of the Department of Immigration upon I/T in Australia, when its Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications [COPQ] looked at the possibility of setting standards for the I/T field. The moves outlined by Martin in the previous chapter to push for increased services and increased quality in services resulted in the question of interpreters' and translators' qualifications being given to COPQ, a body established in 1968 to overcome previous difficulties in lack of recognition of immigrants' overseas qualifications. The Committee's Working Party on Interpreting reported in 1974 on what needed to be done in terms of accreditation levels to provide for basic standards in I/T. Working from the few overseas models available, and taking into account the particular needs of I/T and bilingual work practices in Australia, COPQ stipulated 5 levels of competence, recommended ways of accreditation in each, and recommended the establishment of a national organization to carry out accreditation and overall monitoring of standards.

The 5 levels of COPQ, with some modifications, have determined the accreditation structure for interpreters and translators ever since. The levels outlined were:

Level One: Language Aide Grade 1
Level Two: Language Aide Grade 2
Level Three: Interpreter/Translator Grade 1
Level Four: Interpreter/Translator Grade 2
Level Five: Interpreter/Translator Grade 3 (COPQ 1977)

COPQ was moved to make this grading by consideration that there was a spectrum of bilingual work, starting with a low-level language aide – 'personnel who would use language as an aid to help them perform their primary function, e.g hotel staff, telephonists, airline clerks, and other personnel who, in carrying out their duties, may come into contact with non-English speakers' (Ibid:16). Clearly, this was not an interpreting level, but covered largely monolingual work in a LOTE.

Level Two was seen as an advanced language aide, again not an interpreter, and was basically marked by the practitioner being able to deal with more complex situations, in the same domains as the Level One.

Level Three was the basic professional level for a full-time interpreter or translator, defined as 'general purpose tasks in interpreting and translating in areas such as medical, social welfare, business, travel, escorting and legal matters (police work and lower courts) etc.' (Ibid:19)

Level Four was an advanced interpreting level for assignments 'such as higher courts, international meetings and conferences, and various urgent and delicate situations' (Ibid:21) and for advanced translation work, while Level Five was for international conference simultaneous interpreting and highly technical translation.

COPQ thus saw the tasks appropriate to the various levels covering a very wide gamut of situations, and in its newly found five levels sought to emphatically differentiate I/T work from other bilingual work (as a bilingual aide, receptionist, or bilingual officer).

For COPQ, Level Three was the pivot of the system, the basic professional level of interpreting or translating. It saw this as a level distinguishing those who could carry out professional I/T tasks on a full-time basis. In the longer run, COPQ foresaw that with accreditation tests established, a profession could develop that would become capable of monitoring its own accreditation and standards, in line with other professional bodies. It recommended a national council on I/T to set about accreditation and maintain standards in the field.

Acting on COPQ recommendations, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was established in September 1977. It was created jointly by the federal and all State governments, who retain control over it to the present. It was created with a Board answerable to the joint governments, and was serviced by DIEA. It was charged with setting national accreditation standards and establishing an I/T profession. Its terms of reference covered the setting of standards, developing and implementing accreditation procedures, and approving courses in I/T. Crucially, NAATI's role was also seen to be a terminal one, leading to a fully fledged professional body taking over its functions. NAATI's proposed life was to be very brief, its Terms of Reference including the objective

> To develop the basic infrastructure for the emergence of a national self-regulating professional body in the expectation that this body would, within five years, assume responsibility for the profession, including accreditation. (NAATI 1978)

In setting about its work, NAATI sought first of all to define more clearly the levels of accreditation, and here made some crucial alterations to the COPQ categories. At the top, it reorganised Level 4 and 5 particularly for interpreting. COPQ had envisaged Level 4 interpreting as encompassing both local work (eg in higher courts) and some international work, with the two overlapping and shading into one another, but NAATI wanted to clearly delineate conference interpreting by making Level 4 the Advanced Level of interpreting which it defined as conference interpreting. NAATI left Level 5 not as a level gained by test or course, but a level awarded to those who are 'capable of and have experience of work at international meetings and conferences requiring high level diplomatic interpreting or translating', thus providing a Senior Advanced Level whose tasks would also include supervising and planing the work of teams of lower level I/Ts (NAATI 1978).

At the lower levels, in a move that had considerable impact on the wider profession, NAATI changed Level 2, combining both language aide and interpreting functions. NAATI redefined this as

> a level of ability for the ordinary purposes of general business, conversation, reading and writing. It will be the standard level at which existing practitioners of interpreting and translating will be recognised without assessment. This level is also generally suitable for those who use a second language as an important part of their principal duties. Applicants at this level will be classed as Interpreters, Translators, or both. (Ibid).

This complex and many-faceted definition of Level 2 was to be very influential in future development and future problems for the profession. First, the mention of recognition needs some explanation. Following COPQ recommendations, NAATI devised three modes by which practitioners could accredit: by overseas qualifications; by passing a specially designed NAATI test; or by completing a NAATI approved course. However, there were immediate objections to these procedures from some practitioners, who argued that they had been interpreting for many years, were competent in their area, but should not have to sit NAATI tests to be accommodated in the new system. These practitioners argued that NAATI should ratify their experience by granting automatic accreditation. NAATI relented to this pressure, and introduced a fourth kind of accreditation – 'recognition' – whereby practitioners providing evidence of substantial experience in interpreting could receive recognition at Level 2. Fighting hard to keep its vision of a future profession, NAATI refused to grant such recognition at Level 3; moreover, NAATI determined this mode of accreditation would only have a short life, and practitioners wanting this form of accreditation had a strict time limit in which to apply.

This meant that the level envisaged by COPQ as being strictly a language aide level was now also a level at which many genuine interpreters would be qualified. Crucially, the Level 2 accredited practitioner would be classified not as an Advanced Language Aide, but an Interpreter or Translator. However, other parts of the definition, a residue of the COPQ definition, confuse the issue by still seeming to stress bilingual work – 'ordinary purposes of general business, conversation, reading and writing' – and the use of 'a second language as an important part of their principal duties' leaves this quite unresolved, suggesting advanced language aide work but not on the face of it excluding interpreting. Level 2 was to have a significant effect in future of providing accreditation for many bilingual officers gaining the Language Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA was tied to Levels 1 and 2). For interpreters and translators, however, this issue of the appropriateness of Level 2 was to be divisive until very recent years.

NAATI's task of accrediting at all, and having the idea of accreditation accepted was to prove a difficult one. NAATI sought to impose standards on a field that had developed in ad hoc ways and accommodations, resulting in attitudes not always receptive to NAATI and its objectives. It is important to understand that the role of NAATI was limited largely to issues of accreditation. While accreditation was a necessary first step in ensuring standards, it was only an initial step, and it carried with it no force in industrial or organisational terms beyond that of persuasion. Just as NAATI had to persuade practitioners and would-be practitioners to gain accreditation, so it had to try to persuade others, particularly language services, employers and users of I/T that NAATI accreditation was important and should be the criterion of employability in the I/T field. Even within the then Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, NAATI's own Department, there was no guarantee that NAATI levels would be adhered to in hiring interpreters; a situation repeated elsewhere.

After the levels had been defined and implementation of the scheme begun, NAATI's own problems got in the way: for a start, NAATI's testing was slow to begin, with full testing starting only in 1980, and until the mid 1980s the number of practitioners accredited at Level 3, by any means, was still very small, and often too small to justify using Level 3 as an employment criterion. Most employer bodies, if they stipulated levels at all, opted for Level 2, where there was a larger supply of accredited practitioners. Secondly, the nature of the tests themselves became controversial, as soon as they were applied to sufficient candidates, with predictable results. The NAATI 1980 Annual Report dealt extensively with the problems of satisfactorily preparing tests, the unreadiness of many candidates and the generally poor results: of 1053 candidates tested at the various levels, only 193 gained accreditation, in 25 languages. Another 189 gained accreditation through recognition, and another 40 from courses. The testing path to ensure a profession was clearly going to be slow and tortuous. As we shall see, the path through courses would in many cases be slower still.

Despite these early difficulties, NAATI maintained its testing program, expanding it so that it now covers over 50 languages, covering the languages that provide the vast bulk of I/T work in Australia, but always struggling to keep up with demands for newer languages particularly as a result of changing immigration and refugee patterns.

The structure NAATI adopted for its testing can be briefly detailed. The testing program works through I/T Examiners Panels, who work on devising and marking tests. NAATI wanted Panels to have a mixture of native speakers of the relevant LOTE and also native speakers of English who also understood that LOTE, but this combination could be difficult to find. An English Panel advises on the suitability of English texts for tests, and particularly assisted those Panels where there were no native English speakers. The setting up and proper running of these panels was an enormously time-consuming and uncertain activity in the first few years of testing; it was difficult to find expertise in I/T in many languages, and the difference between expertise in I/T and expertise in language *per se* was all too often glaringly evident. The 1991 study by this author looked at some of these difficulties in detail. Expertise in this area has grown strongly over the last decade, and NAATI now appoints experienced panel members from other languages to provide a core of expertise new language panels.

NAATI was itself eventually dissatisfied with the 'historic compromise' over Levels 2 and 3 that for so long confused differences in bilingual work and interpreting in particular, and seemed to obscure the basis of a truly professional I/T standard. In a move to give the field a clearer definition and to emphatically separate out professional I/T work, in 1991-2 NAATI moved to redefine and rename its accreditation levels, while basically keeping the structure of accreditation it had fought for so long to establish. The reforms which came into effect from 1993, abolished Level 1, and reworded the other levels:

- The previous accreditation at 'Level 2' became no longer a level of translation for established languages but one of interpreting only, and was renamed 'Paraprofessional Interpreter' level. For newly introduced languages, translation at this level continued to be available for few years until that language became more established.
- The previous accreditation at 'Level 3' was renamed 'Interpreter' and 'Translator' level.
- The previous 'Level 4' was renamed 'Advanced Translator' and 'Conference Interpreter' level.
- The previous 'Level 5' after much debate was retained, but at the moment remains a category that is filled only by AIIC members, and its role in the future is open to conjecture. Since the overwhelming number of practitioners are accredited at lower levels, this élite level remains marginal and possibly therefore is able to go on existing even though it does not represent an actual level of tested skill as are the other levels.

This exercise in renaming has been the one major change to the original 1978 accreditation levels. It was not a decision taken easily: NAATI had worked hard and long to get 'Level 3' accepted within the community, particularly by bodies with otherwise little knowledge of the I/T area, and the new nomenclature at least in the initial stages may have caused as much confusion as clarity; however, the nomenclature far more clearly delineates the various levels of work and most crucially makes a clear paraprofessional/professional distinction.

Of perhaps less far-reaching effect, in the late 1980s NAATI changed the basis for giving Recognition, no longer providing it at a specific level of accreditation (Level 2 as it had been) in accredited languages, but now reserving it for those languages for which no accreditation existed. Recognition was changed to imply no equivalence to any level of accreditation or competence, but simply to state that the particular person was active as a practitioner in that language. Many hundreds of practitioners were of course actively working in languages not accredited, but had applied for accreditation and were waiting if (ever) there would be accreditation in those languages. Thus the difference between Recognition and accreditation at any level was underlined.

In considering this issue of accreditation, attention needs to be given to some unique aspects of NAATI's approach. A striking feature of this scheme of classification was its attempted universality, a universality on two counts. First, within this scheme are encompassed all levels from bilingual aide to senior international conference interpreter/translator. This was an extremely bold move, and still today stands as the only national comprehensive accreditation system for the whole spectrum of I/T practitioners and bilingual workers. In Australia, as we have seen, the conference interpreting or technical translation scene was extremely small, with only a handful of practitioners. Yet despite this small number, NAATI (and COPQ before that) had considered it important to present the whole spectrum of I/T work in their accreditation schema. Moreover, while lower levels were defined as language aide work, there was a clear coherence of professional I/T work at levels 3 and 4 and even level 5: what COPQ and NAATI did not want was an exclusive demarcation between the previously established profession of conference interpreters and technical translators for international needs on the one hand, and the newer emerging group of interpreters and translators servicing local needs on the other; rather, they saw all these practitioners as essentially the one profession, with differences of specialities and levels as in other professions. This meant that for Australia, there was not one professional structure of international I/T practitioners dominating the field, with practitioners serving local multilingual needs finding it difficult to be recognised by these established professionals, or in some cases being seen as having nothing to do with interpreting or translating. We return to this feature when looking at the development of I/T internationally.

A second aspect of NAATI's universality is the range of languages covered. In particular, two kinds of language not usually considered to be part of I/T accreditation systems have found a place in the NAATI system: indigenous languages, and languages of the deaf – Deaf Oral, and Deaf Sign [in Australia this is Auslan – Australian Sign Language]. While the issue of indigenous languages has been a difficult one to grapple with, up to 1995 NAATI has been able to give 101 accreditations at Level 1 or 2, almost all of them from short training courses rather than tests. Likewise, it has accepted Auslan, thus providing a unique instance where a sign language receives exactly the same accreditation under the same criteria as spoken and written languages. So far, Aboriginal languages have only been accredited at Level 2 (Paraprofessional) level, and Auslan has been accredited up to Level 3 (Professional level) but is still waiting for much-needed Level 4 accreditation; despite these limitations, however, the inclusion of these languages gives them status and an opportunity to get common standards in the field. The inclusion of these two groups of languages also gives a decided non-immigration edge to NAATI's work: while evolving from immigration concerns, NAATI now has a broader brief to accredit levels of I/T for all languages in Australia.

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Several other developments in relation to NAATI need to be mentioned, and current issues confronting NAATI will be covered in future chapters. In the early 1980s, a number of organisational changes established NAATI more firmly and determined its particular direction of development. Most importantly, in 1983 NAATI was incorporated, jointly owned by the Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory governments, but now able to charge fees and raise revenue in its own right. From this time on, an important component of NAATI finances has been raised by the testing of candidates, now averaging around half of NAATI's budget. This has also meant the testing program has become a necessity to NAATI for its own survival, with perhaps unintended consequences for I/T courses, and for NAATI itself, as large numbers of candidates with little chance of passing tests still sit for them.

In various ways over the 1980s NAATI expanded its activities, for example as mentioned Aboriginal languages and Auslan were added to its repertoire. In other ways, however, the organisation struggled, with a considerable backlog

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in the number of candidates undergoing testing, and constant problems in establishing a satisfactory testing program in all relevant languages, and problems also in relating to the rest of the I/T field.

We have already covered some of the conflicts with practitioners over the issue of Recognition, and skirmishes with particular groups of practitioners and their claims continued to dog NAATI's work. Perhaps of more long-term importance, however, were issues not related to testing or accreditation but to NAATI's overall relations to the I/T field and I/T profession. NAATI never has been an organisation *of* the I/T field. It is essentially authority-driven, set up by federal and State immigration authorities specifically to bring standards to a hitherto unregulated field. Paternalistic care and insistent persuasion could be said to have been the general tone and direction of NAATI activities. The NAATI Board has been appointed always from above, with sensitivity to federal considerations and watchfulness over appointments. The first two Chairs, Sir George Cartland, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania, and Dr Peter Martin, an agricultural scientist and government adviser on many professional issues, were from outside the I/T field and were appointed for their overall public administration expertise. In the state of I/T as it existed in the late 1970s, and 1980s, it could be argued a firm guiding hand essentially from outside expertise was what was needed, and there was little expertise within I/T at that time. However, it has meant that NAATI has always been to some extent detached from the I/T field. Gradually in the 1990s more persons with direct expertise of I/T have been appointed, and now there is usually at least one I/T practitioner on the Board as well as expertise in I/T education and in language services. As is typical of such government-owned agencies, minutes of the Board are not made public, nor is there general input into the composition of the Board, and there is still often concern among practitioners and the profession over the make-up of panels or the priorities of NAATI itself. NAATI has established advisory mechanisms of Regional Advisory Committees in each State and Territory, consisting of practitioners, educators and others involved in I/T to advise on policy matters and to promote NAATI at each State or Territory level, which has in recent years ensured more communication in both directions.

A related issue has been the envisaged taking over of NAATI's functions by a national professional body. It became quickly apparent that the 5 year sunset clause was an entirely unrealistic one, and the creation of a profession from such a diverse set of practitioners was going to be slow and difficult. The lack of professional recognition of interpreters/translators, the problem that, *inter alia*, NAATI was established to do something about, itself hindered the development of a professional perspective among practitioners, and hindered the establishment of any meaningful representative structures that could even pretend to speak for the profession as a whole. There were several attempts to set up State organisations, and gradually in the more populous States these began to gather many of the Level 3 and some Level 2 practitioners who were keen to see professional issues pursued. Numbers however generally remained small and the reach of the organisations was very limited: they had to struggle hard to gain any recognition at all from others in the field (eg language services, employers, government) and among many practitioners. For a workforce that had started out as very much an adjunct to the migrant proletarian workforce, gaining professional status would be difficult. In the early 1980s some State associations did emerge, the most significant being the State Institute of Interpreters and Translators [SIIT] in Victoria, which established a membership of several hundred practitioners and produced a lively journal *Bennelong*.

A national professional organisation, foreshadowed in 1977 at NAATI's inception, took a decade to come about with the establishment of the Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters [AUSIT] in 1987, and it will take considerably longer yet to begin taking over any of the functions envisaged for it so long ago. NAATI devoted considerable resources to help found AUSIT and continues to assist it financially until this is phased out in the year 2000. For the most part however AUSIT now has to make its own way, covering an ambitious brief, of a national kind, with quite marked differences still within and between States in terms of orientation of practitioners, their priorities and their regard for AUSIT. There has not in the past been a professional tradition among most I/T practitioners, and development of a profession among this highly atomised body of practitioners has proven a difficult task. AUSIT is looked at in detail in future chapters.

Finally here, a major issue for NAATI has been the almost byzantine moves to establish a system of *Registration* for practitioners. As previously mentioned, the existence of an accreditation system has not meant universal adoption of that system by practitioners or users of I/T services. There are currently few stipulations and no legislation on who may or may not practice in the I/T field. Where legislation in any area does exists such as in some Police regulations or tribunal proceedings, it usually refers vaguely to 'qualified interpreter' or 'qualified person' without definition of these terms. Registration has long been seen as a solution here, placing I/T on the same footing as other professions, with some legal guarantees over the qualifications and adherence to a professional code of conduct of practitioners. From the late 1980s a series of inconclusive moves have been made to get Registration looked at particularly by the federal government. Ministries have responded extremely cautiously to this issue, but in the early 1990s NAATI prepared some draft legislation for a possible system of registration. There has been much debate among I/T parties over what form of registration should be pursued,with NAATI arguing for a legislated non-exclusive registration, which would gradually encompass more and more practitioners as accreditation and professional development became available in more languages and in more locations in Australia. Other views from the profession have desired an exclusive system of registration. This issue in followed up in Chapter 6.

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Despite various difficulties in its work, NAATI is a landmark example of how it is possible to conceptualise I/T accreditation issues and make some attempt at comprehensiveness and consideration of a myriad of different language demands and I/T needs. It has, possibly uniquely in the world, sought and to a large extent succeeded in bringing a wide spectrum of I/T activity under one accreditation system, and provided a basis for combining both international I/T needs and local accreditation needs on a basis of mutuality rather than opposition.

So far, no aspect of NAATI's work has received sustained scholarly analysis, yet such analysis would be most useful not only for Australia's understanding of its own I/T needs, but as a model with relevance internationally.

Interpreting/Translating courses – the NAATI influence

Complementing the development of I/T services and accreditation was the advent of training. As with those services, I/T training was 'invented' before a system of accreditation or any kind of professional structure was in place. Training came about in the environment of recognition of the need for services, the establishment of TIS, the report of the COPQ committee and activism on the part of ACOSS and other service providers to develop an overall structure for I/T.

It has long been held by NAATI and by others concerned with I/T, that I/T practitioners over time must become characterised by similar training and professionalisation standards as other professions. Regarding training, NAATI envisaged that courses were 'intended ultimately to be the future normal method of entry [into the profession] for candidates for accreditation at Level III...' (NAATI 1978:6), a future orientation that however has seemed to be as elusive in practice as the other NAATI long-term objective of control by a professional body. If TIS and NAATI were clearly inventive responses to particular Australian needs in I/T, then I/T courses must be considered another such invention, with again few overseas models for guidance – indeed overseas models, largely of I/T courses for conference interpreting or translation in academic settings, have had relatively little influence in determining Australian curriculum. Confusion among practitioners and service providers over standards and levels tended also to be reflected in courses, and they have had a troubled existence for a variety of reasons.

A number of quite basic issues need to be understood about the present context of I/T courses in Australia. First, the model in Australia at any level of training is for training in English and one LOTE; the European or UN model of training in several languages has not been followed in Australia. Secondly, the training takes place in dedicated courses, with a clear professional outcome and NAATI accreditation; in Australia, translation for example has never been a part of the academic mainstream. Thirdly, the training is specifically related to the professional issues facing the respective level of practitioner: the interpreting taught in Professional and Paraprofessional courses is liaison interpreting (at both levels) and consecutive interpreting at the Professional level; the translation texts practised on are related to the level of text likely to be encountered in subsequent work. Again, these are profession-oriented studies, not general academic courses in translation. Finally, it must be pointed out that while NAATI approved courses provide an alternative to entry to the profession to NAATI tests, the NAATI testing program in fact continues even in those languages and in those cities which have courses in that language, to the chagrin of those conducting courses.

The first courses in I/T were established in the mid 1970s as a result of the COPQ report and before the establishment of NAATI. The Level 3 courses were led by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology [RMIT] and the Canberra College of Advanced Education [CCAE]. By the time NAATI was established and was able to attend to courses and their approval in 1980, it approved four courses: one at Level 2 and three at Level 3. At Level 3 these

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were the RMIT course and one at the South Australian College of the Arts and Education – the CCAE course had not continued – together with an innovatory Japanese I/T course at the University of Queensland that would eventually evolve into Australia's first Level 4 course.

From this point on, there was considerable development of NAATI approved courses throughout the 1980s, and at one stage it did appear as if courses may develop well enough to become the normal mode of entry to the profession. At Level 3, courses were eventually conducted in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. Level 2 courses were run in all the above cities and in Canberra and Darwin, larger regional centres such as Newcastle and Wollongong, and in Aboriginal languages in Alice Springs (Institute for Aboriginal Development) and at Bachelor (School of Australian Linguistics). Level 1 courses tended to be taught in secondary schools, in scattered instances around the country, for example at Casuarina in the Northern Territory and the NSW course at Burwood, as well as Level 1 courses in Aboriginal languages. Level 3 courses gradually changed from the Associate Diploma award to 3-year Bachelor of Arts courses and finally to Graduate Diploma courses; the Level 2 courses, exhibiting considerable variation at the start in terms of time and course structure, slowly settled over the decade generally in TAFE [Technical and Further Education] colleges as Certificate courses, usually of 1-year part-time study.

However, despite this burgeoning in the number of courses, from the outset the courses were heir to a multitude of problems, stemming again in part from the fragmented nature of the I/T profession, the social factors already outlined that heavily influenced the role of practitioners, and the low status of I/T in the community. In many cases, it was difficult to find enough suitable candidates to provide regular class sises (a distinct problem in Level 3 courses). Even relative to other language programs, I/T courses are staff intensive and put severe strains on institutional resources. There was a lack of clear career paths for students after graduation, so incentive to do courses was low.

Staff in courses had similar problems: few of them had backgrounds as I/T educators – indeed, courses for liaison interpreting were, like other innovations already covered, very much an Australian invention. Staff had not only to teach regular teaching loads, but find course development resources, and construct a curriculum. Staff needed to define their own role and perspectives: some had been practising translators or interpreters, many were LOTE teachers, some were ESL or English teachers, all needing to blend previous academic skills with awareness of I/T needs. There were no curriculum materials available, and teachers had to build these up from scratch. There was also more generally a signal lack of research done by others – while European academia had produced considerable research on conference (simultaneous) interpreting, there is, even to this day, very little produced in the form of research relevant to liaison interpreting. The knowledge base of the courses was thus very uncertain. To obtain some collegial support for these difficult undertakings, academic staff did organise an association, and an annual Conference of the Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia [CITEAA], which has provided a forum for educational issues.

Additional problems attended Level 2 courses because they were normally more flexible in choice of languages and faster to take on languages of newly arrived groups (Level 3 courses tended to teach only the major languages of need, with slow adoption of new language streams). The orientation of Level 2 has been to make more rapid responses to immigration and population moves, including languages of very recent arrivals. This has often resulted in intakes with severe English problems, as well as more general educational problems, and settlement problems for the students themselves.

I/T courses, with their myriad of difficulties in relation to student intakes, staff preparedness, and the wider issues of status of the profession, also struggled with institutional requirements for economic class sises, funding formulae largely determined by other courses and institutional imperatives, and difficulties in some cases in retaining I/T as a focus of staff careers. In the late 1980s, there was a decline in the number of NAATI-approved courses at all levels, with serious consequences for the capacity to professionally train practitioners. The WA Level 3 course folded, as did eventually the SA course. By the mid 1990s this left the Victorian course at Deakin University (formerly Victoria College) and the NSW course at the University of Western Sydney (formerly Macarthur) as the only two viable Professional level courses. More positively, Queensland from 1985 was accredited at Level 4 in Japanese, a notable addition to the courses, and one which indicates the potential for high level courses in this field in Australia. Deakin University also introduced a Graduate Diploma course in I/T in 1988 to supplement its undergraduate course at the Professional level which has now become its main course delivery mode as its BA(I/T) has been seen as too expensive by the University. Deakin was also approved to run a Level 4 (Advanced Translator) course in Mandarin, but with so far very low student numbers. In 1997 the University of Western Sydney also changed its offering from a BA(I/T) to a Graduate Diploma of I/T.

Finally, in 1997 Deakin University took the move, despite all protests, of closing down the I/T courses, allowing no new intakes in 1998. While this move had a long and tangled background, essentially the University saw I/T as an unviable course for financial reasons. At the end of 1996 its home School, the School of Languages, Interpreting and Translating was disestablished and its various courses (languages, linguistics, TESOL) distributed to other schools of the Arts Faculty; I/T remained as a separate unit, the Institute of Interpreting and Translating. This Institute also included the Centre for Research and Development in Interpreting and Translating, which undertook a wide range of research, development, consultancy and service provision. In mid-1997 the long-time head of I/T Adolfo Gentile departed from the University, and soon after the Faculty of Arts started moves to close the Institute and declare its staff redundant.

The Faculty argued that low class sises and the intensive nature of teaching demanded above-average staff input, leading to I/T being more heavy of staff resources than other courses receiving the same funding loading. A further financial concern was that the federal Government had changed the basis of financing post-graduate coursework courses, wanting more of them to become fee-paying. Although indications were that students would still be willing to undertake the course even if there were fees, this was never allowed to be put to the test: the University considered there would not be enough fee-paying students, and closed the Institute of I/T from the end of 1997, allowing only pipeline courses after this. The Faculty rejected any suggestion that it liaise with other tertiary institutions that may be interested in the future of I/T, particularly RMIT which has a paraprofessional course. The University also paid little attention to the considerable correspondence it received protesting this move. The Centre, which attracted outside funding, was allowed to continue.

The situation with Level 2 courses showed marked discrepancies across the country in the 1980s, but there has been a considerable effort in the 1990s to consolidate the field, which has been achieved with the introduction of a national curriculum which is now followed by Paraprofessional courses across the country in Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. From the early years of having extremely different looking courses offering Level 2, a uniformity has emerged of one-year part-time TAFE Certificate courses now offering Paraprofessional training. There have been problems with sustaining a Level 2 course in Aboriginal languages in the NT, and smaller regional courses (eg in Newcastle) have ceased, but by the mid 1990s Paraprofessional I/T education was if anything in a healthier state than Professional level courses.

The early 1990s saw some hopes being raised for a National Training Strategy in I/T, with considerable work on this being done by NAATI, AUSIT, NLLIA and educators, but this initiative became a typical victim of falling between bureaucratic stools. While supported by Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs [DILGEA], the federal Department of Education which would have been the body responsible for implementing such a policy was very cool towards it, taking no action (NLLIA 1993). Education has thus remained piecemeal, dependent upon individual institutions. NAATI's function here has been to set overall principles of development of NAATI-approved courses, approve particular courses, and monitor standards nationally through moderation of examinations. But NAATI has little control over local conditions which determine the viability of such courses. NAATI has attempted from time to time to lay down what it sees as desirable principles of development for courses. In the late 1980s in a submission to an inquiry into the teaching of Asian languages in Australian universities it listed these principles as including a stated concern to have tertiary institutions increase the number of languages they offer, and:

> To discourage the proliferation of Level 3 courses.
>
> To discourage the incorporation of interpreting/translating courses into existing language courses.
>
> To discourage the teaching of Level 4 courses together with Level 3 courses. Institutions should not assume *ipso facto* that progression to Level 4 is logical and automatic.
>
> To urge the establishment of only one, or at most two, Level 4 centres throughout Australia; one for European languages, the other for Asian languages (Ingleson 1989:160)

Yet the battle since then has largely been to maintain existing courses, not so much a battle with proliferation. NAATI has not responded in any major way to the decline of courses, but as the accreditation body it is hamstrung in that it is dependent upon educators themselves to plan and initiate courses. NAATI has exercised its approval and watchdog functions through its education committees, currently the Qualifications Assessment and Advisory Committee [QAAC], which approves and reapproves courses, and has been active in upgrading demands of particular courses, but it cannot through its own efforts introduce or reintroduce courses. NAATI is not *per se* a training body. Most recently, educators both in Sydney and Melbourne have also been introducing non-accredited courses – in both cases, Masters level course-work programs which are not tied to NAATI accreditation, but which are attempting to draw students who are more generally interested in issues of interpreting or translating, and more capable of also undertaking research, which has been significantly lacking in Australian I/T education so far. Meanwhile, within the existing NAATI approved courses, the demise of the Deakin courses leaves only one fully professional I/T training program left – at the University of New South Wales, with an Advanced course (in Japanese only) at Queensland University. We take up this issue of the current parlous state of I/T education when discussing contemporary concerns of courses and training in Chapter 6.

Auslan interpreting, as previously noted, has importantly joined one point of the mainstream by being recognised alongside spoken languages in the NAATI Accreditation system. In a number of other ways as well, Auslan is finding a place among other languages in training, where in Paraprofessional courses Auslan is now offered routinely as one of the languages on several courses; however as yet this is only at Paraprofessional level. Professional level courses have not yet been established and a Conference interpreting level is not available either by test or course but is desperately needed as Auslan users are more and more involved in a variety of international conferences. Auslan practitioners are also involved in a variety of professional concerns and sit on advisory and other bodies related to I/T. Some of these essential issues that relate Auslan I/T to the rest of the I/T field are currently being studied by this author.

SECTION 2

Current issues in Interpreting/Translating in Australia

Chapter 5

Issues for language service organisations

In this chapter we look at the issues faced by the various agencies whose history has been detailed in chapters 2 and 3, and who now all face a rapidly changing social and economic environment in their work. In the next chapter we look at issues specifically affecting NAATI, training and the profession.

The table on page 52 lists the main public sector and main kinds of private sector organisations in Australia as they stand in 1996. In the public sector this is the end-product of considerable changes in various States over the last two decades, as detailed in Chapter 4, though there has been relative stability at the federal level.

Issues for federal services

Current issues for TIS

As noted in earlier chapters, despite the emergence of other strong language services at the State levels particularly in NSW and Victoria, despite the separate DSS service, and despite the growing private market in I/T, TIS still retains its position as the largest provider of language services in Australia. It has a unique position as a nation-wide telephone interpreting provider, though some other services now are beginning to provide telephone interpreting of a more restricted scope. Interestingly, its on-site interpreting work has also continued to expand. A temporary decline as a result of cost-recovery around 1990 was quickly overcome, but there has been a general stabilising of demand for TIS services in the mid-1990s.

We left the historical account at the failure to realise a National Language Services Organisation, in which TIS would have had a key role. Yet the failure of that initiative did not mean an end to substantial changes being made to TIS structures and procedures. Its relations to other language services have also continued to change and evolve.

Internal changes in TIS

The last few years of TIS development overall have seen the following broad changes that have influenced the service, its workers and its policy environment:

- The introduction of cost recovery from 1990. Major government agencies both State and federal are billed for TIS services, as are private companies and commercial users. All such on-site work is billed, and translations, but telephone interpreting is billed only for these agencies if they make more than 100 calls per year. Free on-site service is provided only to GPs and community agencies and the like, with either a quota for such on-site free interpreting in each office or some other measure of control over them. Some 23% of on-site services currently fall into this free category. Telephone interpreting for these agencies is not billed.
- Governments at both federal and State level have generally moved to have each department budget for language services, and in these cases departments are usually free to purchase their language services anywhere, not necessarily from TIS. This has meant TIS needs to think of marketing its services as one service among others.
- A major restructuring of positions has taken place in TIS, based upon a complex Category Review. This has introduced the position of Professional Officer, concerned not only with direct service delivery in interpreting or translating, but with supervision of contractors, training, publicity of the service, contact with clients and related functions. Around a dozen such positions have been created in Melbourne and Sydney each, with smaller

numbers in the other States and Territories.

- Together with the restructuring has come a major shift in relation to those practitioners who are not POs. TIS has generally moved away from an employer/employee relations with most of its practitioners, hiring them as sessional contractors only. Contractual arrangements have been made explicit.
- TIS has retained daytime telephone and on-site operations in its State and Territory offices, but has directed after-hour telephone operations through fewer offices; previously Melbourne and Sydney but now Melbourne only.
- The nature of telephone service has changed by routing all or most calls through operators, who ascertain the language needed and other essential details and then pass the call to either a contract interpreter or a PO. For

Table of main I/T agencies (public sector) and types of agencies (private sector) in Australia

Federal government

TIS

DSS (except in Tasmania)

Policy development in specific areas as part of other portfolios: particularly Attorney-General (general access to I/T; Aboriginal I/T and legal access) and Immigration.

Use of federal agencies or private agencies/practitioners for representational work eg diplomatic contact, delegations etc

State governments

Vic	VITS	I&T	Legal; mental health; education, administration and general; some telephone interpreting
	CHIS	I&T	Peripatetic health
	Hospital Interpreters	I	Critical health
NSW	EAC	I&T	Legal, administration, welfare, general; translation
	HCIS	I, some T	All health
SA	SAMEAC	I&T	Legal, health including hospitals, administration, welfare, general, trade and business, some telephone interpreting
WA		No State services – use TIS Limited hospital interpreters	
Q		No State services – use TIS	
Tas		No State services – use TIS	
NT	NTITS		Legal, health, administration.
ACT	Small Health interpreting unit otherwise use TIS		

Private agencies

General	I&T	Workers compensation, legal, medical, general, some business and conference
Translation	T	Business, community, administration
AIIC members	I, some T	Conference, business
Language-specific	I&/or T	Areas related to specific languages

those not familiar with telephone interpreting as previously practised by TIS, the operation of the Melbourne office can be described. Previously, in each centre interpreters shared one large space, placed either at cubicles or desks or, in the case of the Melbourne office at Preston, around a large oval table. With telephone, computer and various other resources in front of them, they would take calls as they were received or from the phone queue. If this was a call for that particular interpreter's language, they would then get details (agency, names, etc) and commence interpreting in that language. If the call was for another language, the interpreter would pass it to the relevant interpreter, either to the relevant interpreter in that space (hence eye and voice contact was useful among these interpreters), or to an outside interpreter through a phone link. Interpreters at the service thus would play the role of both operator and interpreter. This meant a maximum to the number of calls that could be handled at one time (in Melbourne the number was 16). The reorganisation with operators now handling all incoming calls provides faster throughput of calls, though the time taken to gather basic information and particularly ascertain language can be still considerable. This reorganisation also means fewer interpreters come into the central service now to do sessions of telephone interpreting, which again has effects on communication among staff and corporate culture.

- TIS has been able to substantially professionalise its service and ensure a greater proportion of its practitioners now hold Professional level accreditation. It has made Level 3 the required level for appointment, and in several offices it can now ensure that all interpreters in a number of major languages have this level of accreditation, though the picture is more patchy outside the main States.
- TIS has been very conscious of its comprehensive and immigration-related role particularly in relation to the rare languages, often those of newly arrived groups. For these languages where usually no accreditation or training exists, TIS has introduced detailed processes of recruitment including an interview, a telephone test and monitoring of new practitioners.
- A series of concerns about privacy and related matters have arisen in the light of some Ombudsman rulings and other administrative and legal considerations.
- Changes affecting translation have been less dramatic than those affecting telephone interpreting. The general restructuring has affected the translation side as much as interpreting in terms of the Category Review, but there are generally fewer staff involved in translation and as Professional Officers in translation. Changes specific to translation have included:
  - an increase in the amount of commercial translation undertaken, though this varies greatly among offices and is still a minor part of overall translations
  - greater reliance on interstate practitioners to cover particular languages or types of translation
  - steady reduction in turnaround times for translation
  - a greater demand for correct formatting and higher standard of presentation from practitioners. While in previous years contract translators were often encouraged to come into the office to use the technology available, now there is an increasing emphasis on practitioners needing to have their own adequate technology
- Finally, after more than a year of expectancy and unclarity after the umpteenth internal review of TIS had been made and a long wait for the Minister's decision, came the largest restructuring of all. In late 1997 it was announced that the number of TIS offices would be radically reduced, with Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin and Hobart to close by mid 1998, leaving only the Melbourne, Perth and Sydney offices still functioning. The Minister announced early in 1998 that advances in technology now made it possible to do the work of TIS more efficiently with fewer staff. It was stressed that the functions of TIS would not change – it would remain as a service in all places where actual offices disappeared, but now all telephone interpreting would be done from Perth, Melbourne or Sydney; and on-site interpreters in various localities would also be booked by the three remaining offices. Related moves also saw the beginning of the questioning of the long fought-for Professional Officers positions in the Offices that did remain. Possible future implications of these move are discussed below.

As well as this catalogue of change, it is important to also mention continuing issues where change has come very slowly. Among these would be the issue of payment for contractors, where TIS has remained at its level of payments generally on the low side compared to some State services, though the relation to the private sector is more difficult to determine. Rates have moved upwards very slowly for practitioners.

Another issue where change has come slowly is in relation to training. As we shall see, training initiatives do vary around the country, and there has also been an attempt by central office to define what TIS' role in training should be and what would be the limits to this. Training remains an extremely small part of overall TIS work, though different attitudes to this on the part of different TIS offices will be noted.

If internal change has proceeded rapidly for TIS, then the past five years or so have witnessed even faster changes in the broader environment of language services in Australia. As already outlined, the 1970s saw the first organised development of extensive language services in Australia, and the 1980s saw considerable consolidation of the work of various services and a new concern for increasing resources and reach of services, but the early 1990s have seen a new stress on rationalisation of previous structures and some fundamental questions being raised about the overall role and scope of language services.

Questions of TIS' role in relation to other language services, particularly public language services, are crucial. The spectrum of TIS operations in each State, which differ markedly, can be defined largely by where TIS fits in relation to the provision of other public language services.

In several States TIS provides the only public I/T service of any note: in WA, in Tasmania in Queensland. In these outlying States there are virtually no services provided by State governments or other public providers. In the central States of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, on the other hand, there are substantial State services of various kinds and a recognised though certainly not completely settled division of labour between TIS and other public sector language services. These very different relations to the rest of the field make TIS a quite protean organisation with often markedly different perspectives emanating from its central structure, its large offices in Sydney or Melbourne, and its operations in the other States. We deal here with some of these differences in detail.

Appendix 2 gives statistics on TIS provision, as illustrative not only the work of this agency, but to show the variety of language demands and consequent issue of adequate provision that attends all language services.

TIS – the view from the centre

From the point of view of TIS' central office, a number of issues related to the extensive restructuring and to some extent repositioning of TIS continue to hold sway. Having introduced cost recovery to major government and private users since 1990, full cost recovery is being progressively introduced by 1996-7, including for Local government authorities. TIS has also undertaken negotiations with Commonwealth Health authorities over the question of how the free service provided to medical practitioners could be costed as part of health funding structure through Medicare or some other facility. This constitutes a major piece of negotiation with potentially wider ramifications for health funding and language services within health. Until such negotiations are finalised, TIS is in the anomalous situation of wanting to encourage greater use of on-site interpreting for medical practitioners, but having to place limits on the amount of such free interpreting being done. Moreover, ending of a free service without other financial arrangements being in place could have other serious consequences: discussions held so far have indicated that in a significant number of cases, medical practitioners would respond to any dropping of the free service not by using other language services, but by using other means to overcome the language barrier including more use of family members or any other available bilingual. Further anomalies here relate to the fact that private medical practitioners are not charged for on-site services, whereas private solicitors are charged.

It is also intended to abolish the current practice of billing only for telephone interpreting where an agency uses more than 100 calls per year.

Yet even on the issue of costs TIS struggles to recoup its expected income. Even though the Queensland State government closed its own limited language service in 1993, leaving TIS as the sole public provider in that State, it has refused to pay for services to State bodies provided by TIS. As with the case of medical practitioners, a danger with ending free service is the reversion to former unsatisfactory practices of making do with non-qualified interpreters or ignoring the issue of language needs altogether. Such consequences have also been reported in isolated incidents with other agencies such as some hospitals that have instructed staff to limit the use of TIS. Budgetary supplementation seems currently the only way out of this danger, though of course no obligation exists on government agencies to specifically use TIS: at the moment around one in four Commonwealth government agencies use other I/T services in preference to TIS. TIS has started to draw up formal Memorandums of Understanding with government agencies and others it charges for services now.

Apart from the issue of costs, TIS is most concerned with its corporate and public relations performance and making its system both more accessible and also more accountable in terms of better information gathering. A '13' number commenced in 1994, giving the service one number for the whole of Australia. A Client Charter is currently being considered. A Rural and Remote Awareness campaign has been conducted to raise the profile of TIS in rural areas, which in turn has raised a number of consequent issues in terms of provision, recruiting of practitioners and training in rural areas. Initiatives here have included perhaps the first comprehensive approach to such a problem area through a program in 1994-5 to hold workshops for practitioners and a special round of accreditation in the Hunter Valley north of Sydney, involving NSW TIS and NAATI.

Looking to the near future, TIS has also started experimenting with video-interpreting. Finally, TIS is concerned with its ability to cover the vast array of languages it currently does. As TIS is often a backup service or in many cases the front-line service for languages of low demand, and given current lack of accreditation in most of these languages, TIS has encouraged its offices to undertake various projects in relation to these languages, including joint programs with other language services and training institutions.

At the same time, TIS is limited not by cost alone in pursuing such activities. Like most government language services, TIS attempts to make a very clear distinction between the employer/employee relations it has with its full-time staff, and the arm's length relations it tries to establish with its contractors, seen as independent professionals for whom TIS has no obligations as an employer and who in turn can have only purely formal obligations towards TIS. TIS for example cannot require its practitioners to undergo training, though it can give preference to those who do undergo what limited training can be provided by TIS or others. In some languages of lower demand, practitioners are so scarce they will have to go on being used even when they will not attend training or do other things to raise their quality of interpreting. Yet TIS sees it as an obligation to be a comprehensive service, and in particular newly-arrived groups faced with serious settlement issues need to be assisted. A Joint Central/State Office Working Party has been established to develop a comprehensive training strategy for TIS.

How to position itself in relation to the commercial market is a continuing question for TIS. Until now it has clearly enunciated its primary responsibility to NESB community needs and servicing government agencies and others communicating with NESB residents, but as we shall see in looking at operations at a State level, different offices hold radically different views of this issue. Currently only about 4% of TIS activities relate to the private sector (apart from medical consultations), and the overall question remains as to whether TIS sees itself as an immigration and community-oriented service, or a potentially general language service. There have been limited attempts to look at the potential for more commercial work, for example the possibility of centralising management of high-quality multilingual translations through one office, but as we shall see centrifugal tendencies are strong in TIS and different regional offices tend to make their own running on such issues. The December 1994 internal evaluation of TIS recommended

> that TIS should remain a mainstream Public Service organisation whose primary purpose is to serve the language needs of individual NESB Australians in their interaction with Federal, State and Local government, and with community agencies and medical practitioners. Private sector work should be undertaken only as incidental to this role and only insofar as as it does not interfere with its primary objective. (TIS 1994: 24)

However, in 1996 a new review of TIS activities was asked to look specifically at the potential for TIS to operate in the commercial sector. This issue of positioning in a market *vis a vis* public service obligations is now a central one for almost all public sector language services, carrying with it also susceptibility to newer government ideologies of rationalisation, and of limiting the service function of government agencies, dealt with below.

Cooperation and coordination with other language services at federal and State levels have been encouraged by the various reviews and internal evaluations conducted of TIS, and seems to be the first recommendation of any attempt at policy initiation. This report elsewhere looks at what the possibilities and limits to 'coordination' are and can be. A number of specific areas have received TIS' attention recently. The move of DSS to cover interpreting for the Commonwealth Employment Service is looked at more fully in this report when looking at DSS, but this move came as a result of negotiation between DSS and CES and its host department DEET (now DEETYA – Department of Employment, Education and Training and Youth Affairs). While TIS had previously provided interpreting services to CES, CES and DSS were mindful that they were often servicing common clients, and CES was also concerned with the ability of TIS interpreters to be familiar with its specific area of labour market programs. While TIS understood such a move, it does raise questions of the degree of specialised or general service TIS can and should provide. Other issues of coordination and cooperation with State services are covered when looking at specific State offices.

Finally for TIS, one new involvement has been an international involvement, limited at the moment but with considerable potential for the future. TIS' model of telephone interpreting in particular has now been emulated in several other countries, though nowhere in the same comprehensive way as a government service. Language Link, a service in the UK, now uses TIS, initially to overcome problems of finding local staff after hours and to take advantage of time differences, but also now to tap into particular languages less available in the UK. Likewise, TIS has commenced discussions with some Canadian language services to see if joint activities can be organised. One potential outcome of such links is to try to establish some benchmarks of service and quality; currently, in running what is very much a *sui generis* service, such benchmarks are unavailable. TIS has not until now seen itself as a marketing body for its services elsewhere, another consequence of its strong community-oriented and immigration-oriented service perspective; whether the attractions and risks of overseas ventures are compatible with such an outlook, and indeed can assist in TIS' primary work, is a very important question for the service in the future.

TIS – the view from the major States

The concerns of TIS in the major States can be defined along two axes. The first relates to the historical role of TIS, to provide telephone and on-site interpreting and translations largely for settlement. The key issues in this area are the spread and reach of services, timelines and response time, and above all the sheer size of what has to be accomplished: some 8,000 telephone assignments and 2,000 on-site assignments in Melbourne and Sydney each month, in anything up to 100 languages. Questions of cost, of technology, of quality control, of accreditation and training, of contractual relations with interpreters, of client relations are the substantial issues here. We may call this the Volume dimension. This is a service that is demanded by users and agencies and the demand is incessant.

The second axis of concern in these States for TIS is its relation to a complex field of policy largely related to immigration, and to an equally complex field of other public and some private providers in I/T. The questions here are the larger policy questions that are not unique to the larger States but are made more complex because of the presence of State and other services. Questions of free service versus cost-recovery, of prime responsibilities, of settlement perspectives versus broader language service perspectives, of focus in terms of client base and relations to other agencies, of limits to the service, are the substance of the issues here. This is a policy dimension in relation to the positioning of the service. Importantly, while head office is primarily charged with looking after policy issues and thus the positioning of the service, in fact this dimension crucially affects TIS operations in State offices.

These two aspects are inextricably linked in considering the work of these offices. For a large office such as Sydney or Melbourne, operational or policy changes are tightly constrained by not only present budgets but more germanely by the sheer volume of work that these major offices must process. This has led to the changes to using telephone operators to front telephone interpreting, and many of the other changes enumerated above. To handle such a volume, the very necessary technological advances are the most striking innovation in the last 5 years.

For these major offices, TIS is seen as essentially a service provider in a complex environment in which TIS fulfils the role of *both* a prime provider of services over the telephone and on-call, *and* a back-up service to other services. For example, in Sydney or Melbourne TIS may receive calls to attend legal conferences or medical appointments or other calls, even when there are State services that provide say specific health or legal interpreting services. Often this happens because State services cannot meet demand, occasionally because a language is not available to another service. The telephone service also of course by providing a 24 hour facility acts as a backup to other services that work only office hours. Details of these State services are given elsewhere in this report, but the effects of this on TIS operations needs to be appreciated.

First, TIS is a generalist interpreting service, which provides it with its tremendous scope but also puts limits on the ways it can react to particular fields and assignments. While almost all State services have a specific set of priorities in their interpreting (eg health, legal, State services etc), TIS collects assignments across the field. Yet while other services can devote some attention to quality control, accurate service delivery and relatively close contact with major user agencies, TIS is left to establish what relations it can with a vast array of agencies, and struggles to ensure quality control and appropriateness of service delivery. There are some striking paradoxes in this situation. The first relates to the generalist/specialist distinction. Not being a specialist medical or educational or legal language service, TIS finds it difficult to prepare its practitioners for these specialist fields. It should be noted of course that levels of accreditation in Australia are for generalists, and specialist accreditation is still very much in the planning stages, but other dedicated language services can devote themselves to focused in-service for their speciality, orientation programs, focus on the specific specialist fields, development of strong links with service delivery agencies in that field etc.

Such an approach is impossible for TIS which caters to an almost infinite range of agencies and users. The sheer size of its operation also means it has until now not been able to develop a degree of specialisation among its staff or be able to earmark staff for particular kinds of work; if anything, the view of practitioners is that work should be shared around rather than given to particular individuals. The training which has taken place in TIS in these States thus tends to be in areas either which are essentially for in-house concerns of operations and new systems, or which are clearly seen as not being catered for by anyone. For example TIS in Melbourne has run training programs on elementary aspects of ethics and interpreting jointly with other language services and RMIT TAFE for practitioners in the rarer languages not currently accredited. However, there have also been attempts to keep abreast of emerging issues for I/T and incorporate that into limited training opportunities, such as a series of workshops on 'Women and Interpreting'

In recognition of this, TIS has set up a joint Central/State working party on training, to look further at training needs. The Melbourne office now has a training suite a part of its refurbishing. As perhaps the most significant training initiative so far, the Sydney office paid particular attention to issues of rural access and together with NAATI, looked at ways of providing accreditation and training for practitioners outside the Sydney metropolitan area, concentrating first on the Hunter Valley. Other initiatives cover such areas as 'Women and Interpreting' in a series of workshops by the Melbourne office.

The Sydney office has been trialing the new information system for TIS, TISIS, which will be able to extend TIS information gathering and turn its system from basically a booking record system with a few information functions attached, to an integrated system that allows ready access to knowledge of TIS operations, incorporating extendible categories of service and users, and providing a base for both accountability and planning in the delivery of service. For example, two areas that have grown in importance in terms of information-gathering are the area of gender and measuring the demand for specifically female or male interpreters; and the issue of what level of unmet demand is there in particular languages and areas of service. TISIS will also provide more accurate billing mechanisms useful both for TIS and for client agencies.

While the above are all examples of the ways in which these offices have attempted to cope with issues of volume, the advantages of being in high volume situations also need to be acknowledged. First, the high volume does mean being able to establish a team of Professional Officers which, if well managed, should be able to improve quality of the service dramatically, as well as improve marketing, training, information and other functions. These crucial aspects of the service are inadequately captured in the description of TIS' work as 'service delivery'. Second, high volume means professional work opportunities for well qualified practitioners, and a career orientation. Thus the Adelaide office can identify a number of languages which are its high demand languages in which only Professional level interpreters are used. The number of Paraprofessional interpreters still on the books in major languages in Sydney and Melbourne has also declined dramatically in recent years though, interestingly, a few agencies from time to time have complained that familiar practitioners are withdrawn.

Associated with this are the advantages of having a division of labour. Specialist services can smooth the way for TIS interpreters too by having close contacts with user agencies, train them in working with interpreters, establish professional standards. Training and orientation can be done more effectively in some cases by specialist agencies.

Nevertheless, despite these advantages of volume, because TIS is overwhelmingly concerned primarily and properly with direct service delivery, it cannot attend to the many essential preconditions to providing a quality professional service. The predicament for TIS is very much one where, *if* accreditation authorities did their job comprehensively enough, *if* training institutions trained in a sufficient number of languages to a professional level, *if* a system of registration could attend to issues of an ethical and professional accountability kind, and *if* a professional organisation could attend to professional ethics and professional development, TIS could get on with its demanding task of providing the best possible service to a vast array of clients. Yet because these conditions do not obtain, TIS even more than other language service agencies is very constrained in how it can respond: if it takes unaccredited practitioners in rare languages, how can it ensure any readiness at all for the range of generalist and specialist assignments that TIS interpreters are called on to undertake? If it sees relations with client agencies as crucial, for example to train users of interpreters, how does it spread its scarce training resources over what is a near-universal net of agencies? If it is not primarily a training body, how does it cope with the situation where clearly there are inadequate training opportunities elsewhere? The situation is made only slightly easier by the fact that many practitioners work for a number of agencies and sometimes can obtain some training or at least familiarity with a particular area through contact with that agency. But that fortuitous occurrence is often offset by the fact that in such a situation, a contractor may often give preference to working for the other agency rather than accepting TIS work.

We discuss elsewhere in this report some of the broader questions raised about the role of public sector language services. Yet these are questions that intimately affect TIS and its operations, not only in the smaller States where no or few other public language services exist.

In the central States we can say that a division of labour has clearly evolved between public language services, and between public and private services, and this division of labour has become well established even though there may be arguments or repositionings around the edges. For TIS, such a situation presents a number of issues for it as an organisation. It is important to understand that the situation that obtains is not one where TIS serves federal needs and State language services serve State needs. This has never been the case, and indeed from the 1980s onwards it would be more correct to analyse the situation as one where State services evolved and changed considerably, changing also TIS' relations to the field.

Being a backup service creates all the problems associated with having to fulfil critical needs at times without being able to resource those needed areas as well as could be if that area were a prime focus of the service. This is particularly evident in relation to health and legal interpreting, both of which are areas of strength for the State services in NSW, SA and Victoria. All the State services have endeavoured to provide their health and legal interpreters with at least some familiarity with the field and particular processes of feedback and relations to client (usually State) agencies that can provide some basis of quality and predictable service. As we will see when specifically looking at the State services, there is a good deal of variation in how well this is achieved, but TIS is very disadvantaged here: it has not been able to provide in-depth legal or medical training for its staff, and yet may be called upon (often at short notice) to provide services in this area. Even in the field of providing free services for private medical practitioners, activities are not backed up by systematic training of staff or contacts with the medical profession; the State agencies, being on the whole more able to specialise, can also establish the elaborate connections to these special fields – training practitioners and users, assisting with policy development, etc, which again TIS can do but has no specific charter to do this in these fields more than any other field.

Against this, one saving factor is that TIS and State agencies often use a common pool of practitioners, so that orientation or training received can be commonly shared, and professional and ethical standards are common to the various services. Occasionally, however, particular agencies are aware of TIS' essentially back-up role here and will use TIS not so much as a backup but perhaps more as a last resort. Perceptions of agencies are likely to change only very slowly here, and if agency perception is one of TIS being lowly skilled or less *au fait* with its area than State services, this will tend to persist, and often TIS will not have the resources or programs in place to overcome this. This then becomes an issue not so much of the individual interpreters as perceptions of the service overall. This is compounded if, as still happens in many of the central States, TIS has a wider ranges of languages than some State services and thus in some languages there will be almost total dependence upon TIS.

TIS – the view from the outlying States

In the outlying States, TIS is the front-line provider of public language services. This almost monopolistic position has both advantages (one-stop language services) and considerable disadvantages relating to having national TIS policy on a variety of issues which may not be seen as appropriate in a situation where TIS more or less has to do everything. In Tasmania, for example, not only are there no State services, but the federal DSS does not run its own language service in that State as it does elsewhere; given also the paucity of private providers, TIS Tasmania is virtually the language service.

This has led both to reactions to national policy, and to considerable innovation in these States. Offices in these outlying States, for example, were much more concerned with providing some training from stretched budgets, or with being proactive in terms of contact with client agencies. Simply, they had to totally satisfy the varying demands made on them. This also meant that these offices were relatively more critical of other parts of the wider I/T system outside of TIS – accreditation, training, professional issues for example – whose logic was determined again by needs in the central States and which often needed considerable adaptation in outlying States.

In relation to training, for example, the outlying State TIS services recognised the paucity of training offered, with no Professional level courses being offered in these States currently, apart from advanced studies in Japanese I/T at Queensland University. The reaction was then to see that TIS itself had an obligation, as in the words of a WA TIS officer:

> The conduct and performance of interpreters reflect the training they've been offered, therefore it is the responsibility of TIS to offer that training.

These services were also critical of the Paraprofessional courses that did exist. Criticisms here were on two grounds: first, that in some cases those who passed Level 2 courses were not capable of passing the NAATI Paraprofessional test, and secondly that these courses were producing relatively large numbers of trained language-specific practitioners in a small number of languages, when the crying need, in the view of these TIS offices, was for non-language specific training, teaching the basics of ethical conduct, professional understanding and elementary generic interpreting skills. As a Queensland TIS officer commented:

> There is no need for language specific courses in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese at Level 2, there is an oversupply. We need two Cambodian, two Romanian, two Polish, four Bosnian all at Level 3. We need a range from a whole spectrum of languages. They should run non-language specific courses with people who are prepared to pass the real test.

In the absence of appropriate training courses, then, these offices saw it as a matter both of professional standards but also of their own self-defence that they provide some training. The TIS Queensland office referred to the national TIS policy of providing only TIS induction courses, seeing it as the responsibility of practitioners to obtain training elsewhere. But it was not easy to rest with this policy in the Queensland situation:

> If interpreters and translators don't perform, then TIS gets the blame, so TIS decided to run training for contractors in areas where it is competent.

As a result, both the Queensland and WA office had run a number of courses out of their own budgets, and utilising what other State resources could be found. Such short courses in the past couple of years had covered, in WA:

- medical interpreting (a 14 week part-time course, 25 interpreters at a time in up to 12 languages), financed jointly by the WA State Health Department and TIS Perth. This course has also resulted in building medical glossaries in 48 languages.
- legal interpreting, which grew out of feedback from the legal profession. This is a one session a week course for 14 weeks, run in cooperation with police, Family Court, Social Security Appeals Tribunal [SSAT], Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT], citizens advice bureaux etc.
- a pilot course in mental health, six weeks part-time, again funded jointly by the WA Health Department and TIS. Agencies dealing with torture and trauma victims also contributed to the training.
- a pronunciation workshop
- NAATI test preparatory workshops.
- working with Perth TAFE on a model of flexible delivery of short courses.

Similarly, the TIS Queensland office had run short courses on

- interpreting techniques and practice
- specialised training on telephone techniques
- Mental health interpreting
- Health interpreting.
- a session on linguistic aspects of I/T for TIS staff.

Both these offices saw it as very important as well to provide training for users of interpreters. While this is a regular TIS activity in all States, these outlying States saw such provision in much more global terms of promoting both the TIS service and I/T as a whole in these States. The TIS WA Office in 1994 held discussions with State departments, asked them what their experience of TIS was, their criticisms of the service and then TIS tackled these problems, including providing extensive training for users.This liaison led to State departments starting to actively promote TIS as the State service. In the eyes of TIS WA, training in how to use interpreters is almost more important than training of interpreters, so it runs 15-20 sessions per month for Government departments, hospitals, police etc in effective use of interpreters. These sessions also raise awareness of IT services so are a good marketing tool. For example, a video was released in January 1995 in conjunction with the State Police on how to work with a professional interpreter. TIS also translates multilingual notices to be put in publications of other departments or agencies promoting TIS services. TIS thus provides free training for government employees in State departments (and elsewhere) on how to work with interpreters, and responds to individual needs of State government bodies in an environment where there is no directive to State government bodies to use TIS – they have their own budgets – but TIS sees it has made itself indispensable and responsive to client needs.

Outside the strictly TIS domain, the national Accreditation system and the proposed system of registration procedures also drew criticism. On accreditation, the main complaint was the common one of not having accreditation for all languages. Thus clients received mixed messages over the desirability of professional accreditation and a heavy promotion of Level 3, when in fact in many languages it was unobtainable.

There were however much more pointed criticisms of registration, and these came on two grounds. First, as argued by a Queensland officer, the problem of providing registered practitioners across vast States where standards were always going to be uneven posed insuperable problems for a registration system:

> You can't enforce anything. It won't work. For instance, if you have a patient in Townsville and no registered interpreter, do you let the patient die? An interpreter might be good in Townsville but when she moves to Brisbane, she's no good. In some languages you can enforce requirements, in others you can't.

The second ground was a scepticism about the argument for registration that it would provide a way of handling professional or ethical breaches of conduct of practitioners. It was considered that any such breaches were a matter for TIS itself, and would be a mark of the effectiveness of the organisation: TIS itself should handle in whatever ways are appropriate such breaches or alleged breaches. To say this should be done by a registration body or professional body was to walk away from the responsibility of TIS to ensure an ethical and quality service itself. Often such charges turned out to be based on misunderstandings and called for education rather than censure; often by talking to all parties disputes could be resolved. Certainly, from time to time there were unethical or poor practitioners. TIS should bite the bullet and deal with them accordingly, and needs to be firm and serious about professional conduct. For example, one TIS officer observed that torture and trauma counsellors have a code that includes a no contact rule, and they are only allowed to exchange pleasantries if they happen to see clients. These counsellors were astounded interpreters were not bound by the same rules.

The TIS WA office saw its program of discussions with State departments and other bodies would provide a way of dealing with these professional issues directly. The discussions resolved a number of issues, ranging from the mundane and basic such as staff training in client contact – often as basic as how to answer the telephone more politely. There was also a formal complaints mechanism established so that complaints would be followed up and where TIS staff had been wrong, TIS would admit it was at fault; previously, complainants only received 'excuses'. Operating techniques also changed with proactive relations to agencies, for example designing and distributing a standard fax booking sheet which can be faxed to hospitals or other agencies, avoiding much confusion over bookings. Where TIS used to get 20/30 complaints a month, now by actually following up complaints and communicating to all parties, complaints had dropped to only two a month on average.

Such views represent a genuinely different culture of service and of management in these outlying States. Certainly in the TIS offices in the central States it was much more common to hear regrets over inability to deal with accusations of poor service, particularly in having to deal with such a huge volume of cases and with such diverse agencies, and these offices stressed the need for registration to provide orderly procedures to investigate unprofessional conduct that the organisation itself was poorly equipped to investigate beyond a certain point.

Another difference between central and outlying States was in some instances a degree of innovativeness and quite aggressive finding of new markets and clients. This also related to the relatively lower preponderance of private I/T agencies in these States, but even where private agencies were active, TIS in WA in particular saw it as part of its mandate to chase private business. This office had seen a rise on the number of major translations for commercial clients, and now has twice the national percentage of translation work from the commercial sector. In Queensland, TIS had not actively sought out commercial business but it tended to come to the agency because of TIS' general prominence.

Finally, in terms of outlying versus central States' perspectives, was the difference over the possibilities for a full-time professional career for many practitioners. While in Victoria or New South Wales there were a large number of

Professional Officers appointed in TIS, and there was a relatively large profession of full-time practitioners (not all of them of course working for TIS alone), in the outlying States the prospect for most practitioners was that of part-time work alone. Officers noted the effects of this, including a steady loss of the best qualified practitioners to full-time career jobs in other fields, the inability to demand training or accreditation, and the consequent lack of appeal of mechanisms such as registration. In the eyes of a WA officer, most part-time practitioners regarded the payment from TIS for their work not as a professional salary but as some small recompense for the work they put into their community. In the highly decentralised State of Queensland, the scattering of population and professionals meant even ensuring basic accreditation levels was impossible, and practitioners could not be expected to invest heavily in their own training, even where such training was available.

In the case of Queensland and WA, regional diversity and considerable distances raised other novel problems. In WA this means TIS provides interpreters in logistically difficult (not to mention politically sensitive) sites such as the Migrant Detention Centres at Port Hedland and Derby, flying interpreters in from all over Australia. Over 30 interpreters can be required to work at these Centres at any one time. This was one demand that WA was not able to meet from its own resources, so about 50% of interpreters are now brought in from other States. In WA too some 40 interpreters have also been recruited for limited on-site work in country areas, plus Cocos and Christmas islands. This means the TIS office in WA covers probably one of the largest jurisdictions of an on-site language service anywhere in the world, matching some of Canada's far northern services. To overcome problems of distance, country health services are strongly encouraged to use telephone interpreting. Similarly the Family Court has used telephone interpreting services in country areas, finding this a useful means of both ensuring standards, and overcoming problems of confidentiality which can arise when interpreters are drawn from the same small rural community as the parties in a family law case.

Finally here, mention must be made of the TIS Adelaide office, which does not quite fit into either category of the large Sydney and Melbourne offices, or the outlying States. It is a relatively small service, with three Professional Officers, but one which is probably the most positive about being able to provide a professional service and above all have the resources and organisation to do this. As in Victoria and NSW, SA has a State language services, SAMEAC, and is thus not in a monopoly situation as in the outlying States. SA also has a small but extremely active and competitive private sector, which constantly challenges the public sector services to produce quality work. Adelaide TIS is helped by having a far smaller and far less scattered population to serve than do Perth or Brisbane, and the focus of Adelaide TIS has been to take advantage of this and build a high level of professionalism into service provision. In the most common languages now, Adelaide TIS can rely on using only Professionally accredited practitioners, and while its own training efforts are not extensive, having a pool of qualified people, giving them work and keeping in very close touch has enabled professional development and a growing core of expertise. Standards in translations are maintained again by choosing practitioners carefully and providing them with close supervision, and by doing about half of all translation work in-house, with the Professional Officers in some cases accredited in several languages. In South Australia clearly the smaller overall market and smaller number of practitioners that need to be organised means Adelaide TIS is faced with a much more manageable service than in many other States, and one they express great confidence in being able to handle well. There is a noticeable similarity between the professional culture of Adelaide TIS and the State service SAMEAC, discussed below. Nevertheless, there are concerns: training exists only at the Paraprofessional level in SA, and training needs are not well catered for, with Professional Officers needing to spend considerable time with new practitioners, particularly in the rarer languages. As in the outlying States, Adelaide TIS at times sees central policies as neglecting the needs of smaller States (on the issue of training, for example); unlike the other outlying States, however, Adelaide TIS is positive towards the idea of registration, which it sees as helping to develop a committed if small professional cadre of practitioners.

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TIS is a national service, with common modes of operation that will become even more common with greater use of technology. This report elsewhere however warns that a technological fix will not solve many issues in language services, and whatever technological means are adopted by TIS, local conditions will still be important for how TIS operates on the ground in future. The different perspectives then of outlying and central States need to be appreciated, for many of the issues are fundamental to the service as a whole.

For example, even on such central issues as training, it is difficult to develop national perspectives in an organisation as diffuse as TIS. A frustration here for the outlying States is that TIS cannot order its contractors to undertake training, and has to tread warily on this matter. The National TIS perspective, as viewed by the WA office, for example, is that specialised and general training of practitioners is the responsibility of the individual interpreter or translator, a view that is hard for WA to accept. The WA office sees such training as essential for TIS to carry out because of the paucity of other training providers and the paucity of full-time practitioners, and such training in WA at least can be provided by no-one else but TIS. As can be seen, the range of training specifically undertaken by TIS in these outlying States thus resembles the training that in some cases is available through a far greater diversity of institutions in the central States: language services, universities, etc. However, as indicated, even the central States have moved on training, but are more concerned for niche training (for rare languages, or rural areas) as many mainstream training needs are at least partially met by other agencies.

A gathering storm for TIS

The policy environment for TIS has chilled noticeably in recent years and particularly from late 1996, leading to the decision in late 1997 to abolish five TIS offices from mid 1998, leaving only Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Paradoxically, the period of considerable advancement for TIS as a service brought about by the Category Review, new technology and information services, the appointment of Professional Officers and more links with training and professional development has come at the same time as growing economic rationalism on the part of the federal government and an ideology of reduction of government service and slash and burn of public provision. This mood has been only accelerated by the advent of the Howard Liberal government in early 1996. At an operational level, budget cuts have meant that more direct service work has been pushed back onto the Professional Officers, instead of paying for more sessional staff time, leaving little time for the developmental, promotional and training work these positions were meant to encompass; but paradoxically again, the restructuring of TIS from mid 1998 will mean greater outsourcing once more, and Professional Officers have already been warned their classification could make it difficult to find other positions for them in the Public Service, and that administrative classifications would provide more flexibility. The ultimate step of this non-logic would be to gradually remove I/T specialists as Professional Officers or indeed as any staff at all in TIS, making it merely a section run by managers with little inherent understanding of I/T, who would provide routine managerial functions to coordinate an army of sessional interpreters and translators for 'service delivery'. This would be tantamount to making the service ineffective.

We have earlier covered the extent to which public sector services have been affected by these processes of rationalising, corporatising and in some cases tendering out of services, with the Victorian state services the leader here. TIS has long lived in an environment where federal government departments are not required to buy their services from TIS, but threats to change the service more radically are a deep source of concern.

In the final chapter of this report we outline the fallacy of supposing that language services can be easily subsumed to processes of market demand and current economic rationalist ideologies. The impossibility of easily applying these selling-off ideologies to TIS is even more apparent. Experience around the world (see Chapter 8) is that while there may be many language services for both translation and interpreting, and various possible mixes of public or private sector provision, there tends to be only one major *telephone* interpreting service in any country. This may be centralised or regionally organised, but the national one-call facility is vital to the service. A second vital function that TIS has provided is that, given its immigration brief and its difficult role as a backup to every other language service, it has had a mandate as no other service to achieve comprehensiveness in the languages it covers, with all the attendant difficulties of recruiting, orienting and monitoring in the rarer languages where there is no accreditation by NAATI and often initially little understanding of the interpreter's role on the part of the practitioners. This is time-consuming work, not easily converted into discrete items of 'service delivery'. All language services and agencies are faced with the issue of recruiting in rarer languages, but TIS must do this across the country, and with careful selection, guidance and using whatever training facilities are available, provides in the end a national resource.

This brings us to the first concern about the proposed TIS reorganisation to operate out of only three offices nationally. The proposals that improvements in technology allow for this; that a telephone interpreter anywhere in Australia can interpret for any situation anywhere else in Australia, and that a booking clerk anywhere in Australia can book an on-site interpreter anywhere else in Australia; all do have a surface plausibility. If one sees TIS as 'service delivery' on specified tasks – get an interpreter to interpret for call x or to attend an appointment at point y – such technologically feasible solutions appear reasonable. Yet immediately there are problems. As we have seen, particularly in the States most dependent upon TIS, what has been important in having the service function effectively is local recruiting, building links with communities, establishing links with user agencies, providing at least some training particularly to unaccredited interpreters and interpreters in the rare languages, giving training on working with interpreters, dealing with complaints, and overall developing an ethos. Most of these things cannot be done remotely. They are the essential underpinning of any effective language service in Australia and particularly one that has a brief to cover such a wide spread of languages and territory as TIS. It has already proved difficult enough for present TIS offices in capital cities to effectively service outlying regions; this difficulty may now be magnified many-fold.

Another concern re TIS is the uncomfortable nature of present cost-recovery. From the 1996-7 Annual Report, TIS currently recovers around 35% of its operational costs – some $7.2m when its total costs were $20.4m. In its reporting now it distinguishes between its cost-recovery operation (which it calls its 'commercial' operations) and its community-centred operation for example community groups, private medical practitioners, individual NESB callers. As indicated earlier, cost-recovery has been a difficult issue for TIS, with initially great resistance to this practice from user agencies including other government departments, and outright refusal to pay on the part of some States. A related constant underlying threat from user agencies is that if TIS becomes too expensive, agencies may use other sources of interpreting, which are not likely to be cheaper if provided by professional services; the alternative then may be simply not to use interpreters, reverting to older practices of bringing family members or simply not using interpreting of any kind. There has been no substantial study of the likelihood of these (often second-hand) threats, but as indicated below TIS itself believes most agencies will continue to use it.

A true cost-recovery mechanism would be different, attempting to cover real costs rather than the half-way stage we presently see. The cost of a telephone interpreting session to a user department agency is currently a minimum charge of $10 flat rate per call during business hours, $16 after hours (it should be pointed out that calls can vary greatly in length, but an average of nine minutes is common). The rate for on-site is a minimum of $65 which covers the first two hours. These rates barely cover the cost of payment of the sessional interpreter, and represent a symbolic cost-recovery at most. While this report is not primarily concerned with financial analysis, it could be instructive to consider another example of a TIS taking the issue of cost-recovery seriously and implementing it fully – the example of the UK's Language Line covered in Chapter 8. The present author has recently completed a joint study on TIS in Europe which strongly supports such a cost-recovery perspective in order to make viable this vital service (Pointon et al 1998). It should be said immediately that there could well be good grounds in the Australian situation for considering some alternative to this stark UK example. The use of TIS interpreters by community non-profit groups, the use by individual doctors and concern particularly for newer arrived communities, the present cost of on-site services, plus the fact that TIS has a general access number so that any individual can initiate a link with an institution that may be reluctant to pay – all these factors make the Australian situation more complex, and a graded set of solutions may be more appropriate. It is a concern however that currently TIS seems to be in an awkward half-way situation of cost-recovery, finding it increasingly difficult to meet its community obligations but finding institutions object to payment at all.

That the above issues need to be raised seems to reflect a lack of commitment to making TIS work as it potentially could work, as a viable and largely self-funding national resource, well located to provide both front-line services where no State services exist, and the umbrella service which is its great attractiveness and strength.

At the broadest policy level, I/T must have a strong advocate within the government and, for better or worse, the only department that has seriously undertaken that task has been Immigration. While all government departments are responsible for using language services, there is a patchy picture of the degree of commitment to this, with DSS at one end providing its own service and structuring this into its overall practices to its NESB clients, but at the other end many departments are still little concerned to use or promote language services unless forced to do so. While conceivably a TIS could remain outside of Immigration, the status of I/T as a whole could be downgraded by such a move. It is perhaps unlikely that one option will be the previously discarded notion of the National Language Services Bureau, with current ideologies that seem to favour fragmentation and privatisation, but the idea of one large federal service is still one worthy of consideration to provide economies of volume, greater consistency on professional issues and an enhanced policy role, though a political 'home' would have to be found for it. While Immigration is the only department with the potential and track record for such an expanded service, its recent policy decision of closing five offices, and its inability to move to a viable cost-recovery, show that Immigration also lacks some of the necessary commitment currently needed to this service.

This report cannot engage in predictions of what will happen: prevailing ideologies are indeed threatening, and devising a new future for TIS will not be an easy task. One can envisage a government wanting to corporatise or privatise, but a wholesale abandonment of TIS (or other major services) would be a retreat from notions of equitable services and concern for NESB communities that would be unprecedented. While since 1996 we have seen populist anti-immigration politics raise their head in Australia, there has been little retreat from these commitments by either federal or State governments.

Current Issues for DSS and Centrelink

During the writing of this report, many details of government policies and structures were in a constant state of flux. One major institutional change was the renaming of most of the client-oriented functions of 'DSS' as 'Centrelink' – a change of name, but, it would be unfair to omit, a change based upon a phenomenon increasingly common in the nomenclature of public bodies in Australia – euphemism. The change of name introduces a meaningless neologism in some ways: there was concern to move away from the officious sounding 'Social Security', so a nebulous euphemism was introduced; but there was also the intention of changing the structure of the former regional offices of DSS into general-purpose service centres ('Australian Service Delivery Agencies'), where not only Centrelink but other federal departments would offer services. DSS now remains as a much smaller policy development and monitoring ministry.

As the largest federal bureaucracy, DSS/Centrelink has its own dedicated language service, using TIS or other services only as a backup, and controlling its language services carefully in order to meet precisely the objectives of the department. This is a tailor-made language service. Interpreters are organised by a Migrant (now 'Multicultural') Services Unit in each State (except for Tasmania, where TIS provides this service), who specifically recruit interpreters for work in DSS/Centrelink. Interpreters are used either on a sessional basis in DSS/Centrelink regional offices, or for individual appointments, to interpret between DSS/Centrelink staff and NESB clients. Interpreting situations cover all possible interchanges from front counter work to longer assessment interviews to social work interviews to home visits.

If TIS is primarily a language service, with quite complex relations to very diverse client groups and institutions, DSS/Centrelink sees its service as totally instrumental. Importantly, DSS/Centrelink also sees its I/T services as only part, albeit an important part, of wider communication policies and in particular wider communication policies in LOTEs. It tends to stand somewhat apart from other prominent language services over questions like accreditation, and puts its own departmental needs as the paramount concern. Nevertheless, it is profoundly influenced by other developments in I/T, monitors these, and is a participant in debates over I/T and language policy more generally.

DSS/Centrelink has significant strategies besides I/T for its communication needs, most prominently the use of bilingual officers for client contact work in regional offices. DSS/Centrelink is by far the largest provider of the Community Language Allowance (formerly LAPA) detailed earlier in this report. Its long-term plan is to have more bilingual officers in regional offices, even though currently recruitment is frozen. It also has a Multilingual Telephone Information Service [MTIS] which provides information on DSS/Centrelink services in a number of languages.

DSS/Centrelink is interested in how best to fulfil its institutional objectives and service its clients most effectively: it does not start out from a point of view that I/T should be favoured over other communication means or that it should be less favoured, but rather what works best in what combination, for the organisation.

One issue in which DSS/Centrelink is peculiarly placed among Australian language services is in relation to indigenous languages. As a client-service department, it is not restricted by any prime focus on immigration, as currently TIS is both in its primary linguistic focus and its institutional setting. In servicing indigenous clients, DSS/Centrelink actively recruits staff speaking indigenous languages, using them either as interpreters (a difficult task as will be seen shortly) or as Aboriginal Liaison Officers. It has clearly not waited for Aboriginal organisations such as ATSIC to provide these services. It is thus primarily concerned with its functioning as an institution in relation to clients speaking any language; any language that is used by NESB clients thus needs to be catered for by DSS/Centrelink.

I/T services are organised for different languages either by Aboriginal Liaison or by a Multicultural (formerly 'Migrant') Services Unit in each State.

In the Migrant Services unit, the interpreting service grew in response to needs in local regional offices and came to be financed and controlled in various ways, not all of them centrally coordinated. As we saw in Chapter 3, in some regional offices with heavy and consistent language demands, virtually full-time interpreters were employed. The advent of the MSU in 1985 in each State (except Tasmania) provided overall planning and allocation of resources, particularly in supplementing the relatively few full-time employee interpreters with others placed in regional offices on a sessional basis (eg one or two mornings or afternoons a week) or as on-call for specific appointments. Lack of coordination led to the full-time interpreters coming out of 'salary dollars', the sessional and on-call coming out of 'administration dollars', with attendant problems of identifying the real level of resources used for interpreting.

There has now been a major reorganisation of MSU services in the last few years, with the following significant changes:

- There is considerable thought over future policies in this field, with I/T and related language needs being looked at globally to see where I/T or MTIS or bilingual officers should be the prime means of service delivery. Other issues here include whether proficiency in a LOTE should become a secondary selection criterion in recruitment of general DSS/Centrelink staff. There has been substantial bilingual recruitment in the last five years, with Area Offices seeking staff being given customer profiles for their office which enable them to make language-specific requests. Other changes in Public Service recruiting (and the considerable downsizing of the Public Service generally) has made it difficult to fully carry out intentions here.
- At the global level also, DSS/Centrelink is very concerned to retain its own dedicated language service. While it envisages that sub-contracting to some other services may take place for specific low demand languages, this will be a restricted practice as the Department sees a dedicated interpreting service as important to its own servicing of clients. Only in Tasmania does it not provide its own language service, leaving the field to TIS.
- A small number of full-time interpreters with whom the Department clearly had had long-term employer/employee relations were finally made permanent in the Department. Their future role however remains unclear, as the Department does not want them to be only interpreters, but hopes that many of them can be turned into bilingual counter staff to work one-on-one with clients or assume other mainstream positions. Given the background of these employees, however, this will have to mean considerable retraining. The TIS option of creating a pool of Professional Officers specifically for languages is not considered an appropriate one in the DSS/Centrelink context.
- For the majority of interpreters not in full-time employ, there is a move away from employer/employee relations, in line with current practice in other language services to see these practitioners as independent contractors.
- There are now attempts to rationalise where sessional or on-call provision is more effective for interpreting, and within on-call provision to look at issues of payments in relation to time worked. At the moment an on-call five minute interview costs MSU the same as one of two hours, as two hours plus travel is the minimum payment made for an assignment, in line with common practice. This of course is an issue being looked at by many language agencies.
- To look at its language services effectively, MSU is developing a better data base to replace its former record keeping which was manual, and essentially suited to booking and payment rather than planning purposes. Indeed, the necessity to get a better information base is crucial: DSS/Centrelink considers that while client demands were met and appropriate language services were provided, there was little quantification or monitoring of what was actually done. In some cases there were unacceptable work practices, because in some regional offices there was uncertainty over how to work with interpreters and what their proper role was. Controls were not right and there were too many rough edges; much has recently been done to ensure 'a decent language services information system': such a system should provide information on interpreter usage, demand and deployment, as well as provide information on training, complaints and so on.
- Remuneration for DSS/Centrelink interpreters is on the low side, at the time of writing the report some $40 for a minimum 2-hour appointment plus travelling time, comparable to TIS rather than some of the better-paying State services. At these rates, DSS/Centrelink feels it is able to recruit suitable interpreters, and is unlikely to radically review its fee structure unless recruitment becomes difficult.
- MSU is often seen to set a lower standard of accreditation for its practitioners than many other services, publicly setting a requirement for Paraprofessional level accreditation (where available) as the minimum for its interpreters. Considerations here include the obvious scarcity of Professional level interpreters in some

languages, but more instrumentally the desire to look at all aspects of an interpreter, including how well they fit into the DSS/Centrelink structure, and willingness to work at certain periods of time. Paraprofessionals with a long record of adequate performance are not likely to be displaced. Advertisements by DSS in the past specifying Level 2 as the minimum level of accreditation required have often drawn sharp comment from others in the I/T field such as NAATI or professional bodies. In practice, managers will always attempt first to recruit professional level interpreters, and so DSS does not differ from other agencies in this regard, but the public perception is likely to remain until advertising is changed.

- DSS/Centrelink provides no training as such for its interpreters. They are given an orientation session when first appointed which deals with bureaucratic matters, but where interpreters are also given a guide to ethics and privacy issues, and the expectations of them on the part of the Department. From time to time bilingual glossaries have been produced on DSS/Centrelink terminology and related areas such as medical terminology, but there is no systematic approach to training or upgrading of knowledge. Practitioners themselves are expected to be familiar with new developments in DSS/Centrelink as far as they may impinge upon interpreting. One of the explicit reasons DSS/Centrelink has for maintaining its own service is that it can give information sessions to its interpreters on specific DSS/Centrelink issues, but this in fact is rarely done.
- By contrast, there has been a considerable increase in the training of DSS/Centrelink staff in responding to cultural differences and working with interpreters. A day-long component covering these aspects is now a regular part of DSS/Centrelink staff customer service training, for new staff and including some refresher courses. Given the relatively heavy use of DSS/Centrelink by NESB clients, such training is seen to be essential to achieve publicly announced Access and Equity objectives. Interpreters sometimes used to take on a cultural information role but now their role is strictly interpreting. DSS/Centrelink considers that cultural issues are not primarily issues for interpreters but need to be tackled on a regional basis. DSS/Centrelink now trains its staff in cultural awareness and the interpreter's role is narrowly defined, so that all DSS/Centrelink staff recognise their own role in responding to cultural differences. For example, some refugee groups are suspicious of government, but this can be overcome by an organised approach, for example more migrant advisory committees are being formed to perform this function.
- DSS in 1995 extended its interpreting service to one other agency – the Commonwealth Employment Service [CES] whose task was to register the unemployed and attempt to find them work, and to develop suitable training and management strategies for the long-term unemployed. In Australia's particular bureaucratic arrangements, CES has always been separate from DSS, and is in fact located in another federal government department, the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs [DEETYA]. The function of DSS in relation to the unemployed is only payment of benefits to the unemployed, and deciding eligibility for these payments. Virtually all CES clients are also DSS clients, even though the two agencies are formally separate. Previously, CES used largely TIS or other agencies for its interpreting needs. DSS has made it clear this should be seen as a specific extension of DSS interpreting role into a related agency that services in fact many of the same clients as does DSS, and this is not an intention to become a broader interpreting service itself. The CES also appointed Migrant Liaison Officers, and there were consultations between the two agencies on their work. Needless to say, this structure has also now undergone a change over 1997/8 – and again, euphemisms are the result. CES has now been officially abolished, to be replaced by 'Job Network', a network of private and public sector agencies which have tendered for government contracts to provide employment services to the unemployed. 'Employment National' is the largest federal government agency which will replace some CES functions. This has been a significant and quite controversial move to radically alter employment services in Australia; all operators in the field whether government or private have points in their contracts which specify relating to diverse groups and the necessity to use language services, but relations between interpreting services and the new operators are at the time of writing still being worked out.
- The role of the Multilingual Telephone Information Service has also been slowly changing. It was originally established to provide information only on DSS services, and many DSS clients found it a useful alternative to trying to get information from local DSS offices who may or may not have interpreters on hand at any particular time. It currently operates in nearly 20 languages. MTIS is seen as a good example of where 'success breeds resources': it started small but has built itself up by providing a wider range of languages, for example now providing, part-time, Bosnian. The stress on MTIS has always been on information, though recently it

has on occasions performed more interpreting, often as a result of a particular client call and the need to follow it through. For the most part, however, DSS/Centrelink offices use TIS for telephone interpreting. Now however, MTIS has also moved to become more part of the operations of DSS/Centrelink, for example by taking routine details of clients (address and status changes, for example) which can if needed be followed up by regular DSS/Centrelink staff. There is some uncertainty whether in future this may become a system of bilingual officers servicing clients over the telephone, as English-speaking clients can currently be serviced over the phone for many standard DSS/Centrelink operations.

- More broadly still in terms of community relations, some regional offices are very active in community relations, such as Springvale in Victoria, which has been widely publicised as a model of relating to its community and which uses extensive multilingual materials and its own multilingual staff. DSS/Centrelink also uses SBS for community announcements in some 30 languages.
- DSS/Centrelink has also extended the operation of language allowances, complementing the Community Language Allowance, where bilingual officers perform standard operations in other languages with NESB clients, with an Occasional Interpreting Allowance for officers who are not employed as interpreters but who may from time to time besides their other duties act as interpreters. They are paid for these interpreting sessions, and must have NAATI Professional level accreditation to gain this allowance.
- Advances in technology have given MSU new opportunities to spread multilingual information. The homepage of DSS/Centrelink includes a multilingual facility to gather information and provide feedback in up to 20 languages over the internet. There is also planning for the introduction of 'kiosks' (fixed booths with screen and on-line connection) to be located in publicly accessible places outside DSS/Centrelink offices to provide access to on-line operations, which will also be multilingual.
- Finally, wider institutional imperatives for DSS/Centrelink will also impact upon language services. As mentioned, the long-standing pattern of having DSS regional offices will change in the near future with Centrelink offices also covering a wide range of Commonwealth functions (DSS, DEETYA, Immigration, Health and Human Services etc). While it is impossible currently to predict the detailed impact on MSU language services, it is clear that the new agencies will bring together a variety of Commonwealth agencies that currently use different language services and may have quite diverse orientations to such services.

The next few years should see a complete development of information systems that can usefully contribute to monitoring and planning functions within MSU and more broadly within DSS/Centrelink. When such a system is reasonably in place, it will be able to provide an extremely important measure of the extent of language needs that Australian institutions face. It is also hoped that the rather fragmented picture that obtains today over provision of language services, both I/T and bilingual officer work, will be more coherent in respect of our largest public bureaucracy.

One related area that must be mentioned is that of bilingual officers and the Community Language Allowance. With a large number of bilingual officers on its staff, DSS/Centrelink sees this as a resource that must be carefully managed and utilised. However, as the major employer of CLA employees, DSS/Centrelink is frustrated by the lack of information about this category of employees. Even basic data over how often language skills are used and the number in each office are difficult to get from current information systems. It is thus a resource that often remains an unknown quantity. At the moment information here is only global, for example, that currently about 12% of DSS/Centrelink staff are of NESB, but this contrasts to some 20% in the Australian community overall. Yet it is suspected that this discrepancy is because many do not declare their language competence for a variety of reasons, or are unaware this is of interest to the organisation.

It has been the interest of DSS/Centrelink and some other public institutions in retaining a CLA and using it as part of its operations that has persuaded NAATI to go on having Language Aide tests, even though the old 'Level 1' was scheduled for total abolition in the new nomenclature of I/T accreditation. The continuation of this testing however has had some unintended consequences. Some bilingual officers who previously received LAPA but who have been asked to resit have now failed the Language Aide test. In the eyes of DSS/Centrelink staff, the NAATI test was not right yet, and in particular not specific enough to areas DSS/Centrelink staff must work in. NAATI on the other hand justifies its test, arguing that it was devised exactly with the needs of DSS/Centrelink and other public institutions in mind, and that the test did reflect the typical work DSS/Centrelink staff or others were expected to do; failure is related to the standard of language (either English or the LOTE) of the candidates; the Language Aide test, like so much of NAATI's testing, finds many candidates wanting. We return to this in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, many interpreters complain that such bilingual officers as in DSS/Centrelink do work as interpreters, and unfairly take work way from professional interpreters. MSU denies that such a practice is encouraged or condoned by them, but the practices of individual offices or officers are difficult to monitor in this regard. The instituting of the Occasional Interpreting Allowance is also one means of safeguarding against this, clearly marking out those officers who may also perform interpreting.

Also in relation to bilingual officers, there is often a time gap between the arrival of a community in Australia and the recruitment by DSS/Centrelink of officers from that background who could obtain the CLA and work as bilingual officers. In this way, the DSS/Centrelink staff profile never quite catches up with the community population profile. This is an issue of course of wider relevance to the whole language services field.

While the bulk of DSS/Centrelink I/T work is interpreting, it is also looking at its translation needs, here again viewing this in the context of total communication needs with NESB clients. DSS did for a number of years maintain a small translation unit itself in Canberra, to translate largely its own publicity, but also to translate client documents. In 1995 these function were decentralised to Melbourne and Sydney MSUs. There are no longer any full-time DSS translators, but DSS interpreters also accredited as Translators are used to translate client documents. Meanwhile, translation of DSS brochures rests with another section, Information & Public Relations, which operates centrally to meet the wider information dissemination needs of DSS. In relation to these translations, MSU advises on cultural issues, style and content, and can arrange checking of translations. An important aspect of MSU's work here has been keeping abreast of demographics and language needs to advise which groups should be targeted. Most emphasis is placed on newer communities without infrastructure, but it can be politically difficult to discontinue production for older established communities, eg Italian. As of writing, new Centrelink structures for community liaison and information are being worked out.

A couple of other translation strategies are currently being considered to meet information needs. One is to make available, instead of large numbers of translated and distributed brochures (whose use and effectiveness has often been problematic), translations of basic documents and brochures that can be obtained by offices by 'print on demand' by fax, thus obviating the need for large stores of translated brochures in many languages. This procedure was found to be particularly useful in country offices, but has been taken up by all offices. The presentation of these translations is basic, but will improve, and the internet resources that are now rapidly being developed will provide new downloading facilities for multilingual materials.

Currently, a rethink is occurring over where translation fits into the total information effort of DSS/Centrelink. From the point of view of MSU, 'the real concern with multilingual information strategies is knowing which ones work best' . A lot of money can be spent on translations, which are then not used. MSU sees itself as having an open mind currently, looking at the best methods of communicating with different groups, and has tendered research into the information needs of NESB communities.

DSS/Centrelink and Aboriginal languages

Arrangements for meeting language needs of Aboriginal clients of DSS/Centrelink are far less formal than for NESB migrants. Some interpreters are engaged for individual appointments, and informal interpreting help is also given by people in the community. As well as interpreters, DSS/Centrelink regional offices have Aboriginal Liaison Officers [ALOs] who have a broad role: they are a vital link to the community and ensuring access. They were not chosen for their language skills but general consultative skills and the knowledge of communities. Some can speak Aboriginal languages or Kriol and use these in their work. The ALOs also advise on which interpreters to engage. As well as interpreters and ALOs, some DSS/Centrelink staff will also have Aboriginal languages, but unlike other languages, there is no system of a Community Language Allowance for ATSI languages, and DSS/Centrelink believes there should be.

In this area there was still great uncertainty over basic information and numbers – for example, who was or was not Aboriginal, or who spoke which language. There were also still sensitivities in being defined as Aboriginal.

DSS/Centrelink noted that ATSIC said it would take over Aboriginal I/T services from TIS, and the language aspect has been included in ATSIC's Access & Equity plan, but hasn't gone much further. Given the slow and patchy development of language services elsewhere for these languages, DSS/Centrelink considers itself to be 'the forerunner on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages side'.

Two particular issues in Aboriginal languages are considered of paramount issue for DSS/Centrelink:

- first, how to remunerate and employ interpreters in ATSI languages, and establish a clear role for them in the context of DSS/Centrelink needs. There was a particular need to fit on-site interpreters into regional offices more appropriately.
- second, there was the question of accreditation and registration. With few practitioners accredited by NAATI, the accreditation which did exist was mostly unofficial, with DSS or the medical system using known contacts to find practitioners.

To set up training and accreditation, regional offices would need to be asked what skills are required and then work back from there. DSS/Centrelink considers accreditation by testing wouldn't be appropriate, as there was a basic need for community involvement and understanding of the whole context of Aboriginal clients. DSS/Centrelink thus considers the NAATI model was not necessarily appropriate, and a new model was needed.

Four nuclei were now starting to form where a concentration of language needs could be identified: Alice Springs; the South of WA, the Pilbara, and the North of WA.

Finally in relation to DSS/Centrelink and Aboriginal languages, DSS/Centrelink considered that Kriol needed to be recognised as an Aboriginal language as it was widely used by Aboriginal communities. While there were numerous Aboriginal languages, there was also at times a crossover with Kriol. Importantly, NAATI now recognised Kriol, but training and accreditation were still lagging behind.

Issues for State services

Issues for Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service

As noted in the chapter on historical developments, VITS came about as a result of an amalgamation of several specialist language services: the Mental Health Interpreter Service [MHIS], Legal Interpreting Service [LIS], the Education Interpreting Service [EIS] and the General Interpreter Service [GIS]. LIS and MHIS still retain an identity under VITS, but the other two services have been completely dissolved into VITS. Health interpreting (apart from Mental Health) remains almost entirely outside VITS' domain, and this will be covered separately.

VITS has been radically repositioned in the language services market by being removed from the Ethnic Affairs Commission and being corporatised. As well, all State bodies, which traditionally often exclusively used State language services, are now at liberty to purchase their language services from any provider. A deregulated market was created on July 1, 1995. VITS thus has to provide services in a market in which it no longer can rely on any statutory or traditional presumption of exclusively serving State agencies.

VITS' response to this new situation has been to aggressively market itself, to seek new areas of work, to consolidate its traditional clientele through increased prominence in service, and in many ways to see itself as a trendsetter in language services.

As previously explained, historically State services have provided higher remuneration levels than have Commonwealth services or many private agencies. VITS' remuneration for interpreters has been the highest in the State ($62 minimum per two hours in 1995-6, subsequently changed in a restructuring of payment categories), to maintain quality and provide an incentive for interpreters to work in highly demanding fields such as legal work or mental health. However, VITS also finds this high remuneration difficult to sustain, leading to an attempt to reduce this in 1995 and 1996, which also led to industrial action which is discussed below.

VITS demands Professional accreditation of its practitioners, and in many cases looks for those with Advanced accreditation both for interpreting and translating. Like an increasing number of other major I/T agencies, it also informs client agencies of the level of accreditation available for a particular assignment, allowing client choice to accept or decline. This process is not without its interesting revealing of attitudes towards interpreting among client agencies, such as the instance where a County Court took a Level 2 practitioner rather than pay for a Level 3 practitioner from interstate whom VITS could provide; money came first..

However, in some cases VITS' other initiatives also enable it to demand more than simply a particular accreditation level. For example, in legal interpreting it runs its own training program, the Legal Orientation Course, as previously described, which also enables LIS to discriminate further among its practitioners – those with Professional level accreditation plus the legal orientation course will receive preference in jobs over those with Professional level accreditation but without the Legal Orientation course etc. Importantly, the Legal Orientation

Course is open to all interpreters, even those who have no accreditation, particularly in languages of lower demand. LIS has run over 20 such courses since 1985.

VITS has also worked jointly with TIS and CHIS to provided some workshops for practitioners in low demand languages for which no accreditation or other training is currently available. The course gives a basic introduction to professionalism and to common problems encountered by interpreters. The finding of suitable practitioners for these languages continues to be a major issue for all I/T agencies and this issue is discussed further in this report.

Another area where VITS is interested in training is in mental health interpreting. As previously outlined, the Mental Health Interpreter Service provided a limited but highly specialised service, with a small full-time staff in three languages, and recourse to relatively small numbers of on-call interpreters who tended to be carefully chosen for their skills in mental health interpreting. As such, it represented something of an élite service. Also, reflecting the structure of the health system at the time, MHIS stood apart from other health interpreting services. Not least of the imperatives forcing change now in mental health interpreting under the umbrella of VITS is the fact that the wider mental health system is now increasingly being mainstreamed into the overall health system, yet the situation obtains in Victoria where VITS does not cover health interpreting (that is covered at the State level by CHIS and hospital interpreters) but VITS has responsibility for mental health. VITS has been looking at offering mental health training particularly in the Western suburbs of Melbourne where the greatest mental health need exists, but this has not yet been run and nothing of the model of the Legal Orientation course exists for mental health or for any other area of VITS responsibility.

VITS is extremely frustrated by the lack of training opportunities at present for practitioners, and the question of whose responsibility such training should be is constantly raised. VITS experience has been that practitioners will take training if provided but as they are poorly remunerated, and there aren't enough resources to start up training courses in many specialties or for many categories of practitioners, they will never do it for themselves. Most of the time they are in isolation from each other. The LIS course provides a successful model because of its link to employment prospects by LIS for those who successfully complete it, but this model need not be the only one: in many cases even very elementary issues need to be part of training programs simply to raise overall professional levels. The question of whose responsibility this is, and how the responsibilities of I/T agencies, NAATI and training institutions never seem to quite cover those practitioners most in need of training, continues to frustrate VITS.

Meanwhile the other side of training is training client agencies, which VITS does across a broad field of agencies, concentrating particularly on the legal, public authority and welfare fields and education until recently. Many issues come up here which still shows confusion on the ground over the role of interpreters. One of the more intractable areas is that of education, where over the years ethnic teachers aides [now called multicultural aides] have been appointed to perform many liaison functions in schools and ensure better home/school relations in schools of high migrant density. Some of these aides are also accredited as interpreters, some are not, and there is widespread variation in the attitudes of schools and of individual aides over their also being used as interpreters. Some interpreters registered with TIS are also Multicultural Aides. Some schools insist on particular aides (who may or may not have Professional level accreditation) for use on parent-teacher nights for interpreting. In some cases there are Multicultural Aides who do have Professional accreditation as interpreters; in cases like this, there is a potential for conflict of interest when Aides step in and out of their various roles. Again, this is a clear and important difference between departments, practitioners and Language service agencies over how interpreters should or should not be used. In VITS' view there is a need for bilingualism but there has to be a distinction between plain information-giving and specific, formal settings, where interpreting takes place. VITS' responsibility for education interpreting has subsequently been given to a private agency – All Graduates.

Other significant issues for VITS can be briefly summarised.

- In terms of organising its personnel, VITS is adamant on the superiority of employing on-call interpreters and translators rather than full-time practitioners, and has in fact divested itself of all full-time practitioners, of whom there were around 50 at the peak of the former separate services. VITS now estimates that previous full-time employee practitioners were able to do far fewer interpreting assignments for the same cost as sessional practitioners are now able to do. The performance of translators previously was 500 words per day. Now that they are all on contract it is 2000 words per day. Therefore it is feasible and more realistic in the eyes of the organisation to have them on contract. Previously full-time trainer positions are now also covered by contract staff.

- Another important aspect is concentration of technology. In Translation, there has been a 30% increase in number of words translated due to technology such as bromides, scanners etc. VITS sees translators as willing to update and invest to keep up with movement and change both in language and technology. VITS computers are accessible also to all contractors for set projects, especially those with high standards of layout, presentation etc.
- As a major innovator, VITS is now diversifying into a number of fields that previously have been little looked at by State language services. Two that must be mentioned are organising conference interpreting, and a telephone interpreting service Language Link. VITS has only in the last few years started to offer conference interpreting, and has begun to win contracts for international conferences, including an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] conference – interpreters there were paid $500 per day, well above rates for local interpreting, and eight interpreters were trained by Deakin University for the conference. A feature of this interpreting was the range of languages in which conference interpreting is now needed – including Vietnamese and Korean, as well as the increasingly common Mandarin and Indonesian.
- In the Language Link program, interpreters are provided with mobile telephones (they have to buy these) and can then be contacted for spot telephone interpreting, being paid by the minute. Currently the average waiting time for a client is four minutes (which compares favourably with TIS). The service is available in the 10 top demand languages. Prospectively, there could be an interstate market for this service, given the heavy loads of TIS and agencies in all States now being able to procure their language services where they like. Interestingly, TIS has also at times made limited experimentation with mobile telephones, deciding that on the whole quality of sound was very difficult to maintain. This issue may or may not be decided by technological advances.
- Following the NSW model, Victoria launched an Interpreter card in 1995 for members of ethnic communities, which publicises public sector I/T providers – in this case VITS, TIS and CHIS.
- Finally on the issues peculiarly facing VITS, are a set of industrial issues relatively new to language services, but stemming from the historical situation of public sector bodies (in this Victorian case VITS and CHIS) paying generally more to their interpreters for a standard service (usually a 2-hour block) than private services. With corporatisation and VITS having to position itself in the market more competitively, this cost structure was seen to be a hindrance and both CHIS and VITS sought in 1995 to reorganise the basis of payment to reduce overall costs. Interpreters responded militantly, perceiving this as a reduction of their payment. Without going into the local details of the dispute, this incident developed into the first serious industrial dispute in language services, to the surprise perhaps of all concerned. Interpreters refused to work and disrupted the booking service, but negotiations became very messy with a number of different bodies involved and with interpreters also not able to always speak with one voice. The main issues were resolved finally by the intervention of the Health Services Union, which was able to conduct standard industrial negotiations on the issue, with a final restoration of previous conditions. The dispute flared again in late 1996 and through 1997. While industrial disputes are not uncommon in Australian life, they have been relatively rare in language services, adding a new element to the current repositioning of services. We return to this in the next chapter when looking at professional issues.

VITS interestingly stands very much as a departure from the model of a previously traditional public sector language service focusing on a specified public sector clientele. While this still remains its basis, in terms of what language services could look like VITS represents a clear alternative future model with its corporatisation, emphasis on marketing its services and in chasing new markets including clearly commercial markets.

Issues for the NSW EAC

Unlike Victoria, where VITS has been removed from Ethnic Affairs affiliation, in NSW the State language services are clearly and strongly identified with the Ethnic Affairs Commission and remain the EAC's largest activity. The NSW EAC sees this as the strong base that gives it a constant constituency and market, and a central place in equity provision for NESB residents and those servicing them.

While thus contained within the EAC and seemingly without any imminent prospect of corporatisation, the EAC language services have nevertheless responded to many of the same issues as in Victoria. In NSW, as in Victoria, a scheme of cost recovery has been introduced from government departments and other significant users. In NSW, as in Victoria, State bodies are free to purchase their language services from any source, so that the EAC is in direct competition with other service providers. Finally, both services are challenged by a new environment of tighter government spending, issues of quality and the need for the services to find new markets and guarantee a stronger corporate image for itself. Yet interestingly, on some issues such as employment of staff and building up core activities, VITS and the NSW EAC have gone in radically different ways.

EAC's historical link to the legal system remains as the strongest area of EAC work, and accounts for around half of all Interpreting work. As in South Australia, the system of court interpreting had long been standardised as one where in criminal cases the interpreter is the interpreter *for the court*, booked by the Clerk of Court, not booked by one of the parties. The court system in NSW provides part of the budget for the cost of interpreters in these cases, the EAC providing the rest. In civil cases, interpreters are arranged by the parties. The EAC charges federal courts and non-State institutions. The EAC is also heavily involved in interpreting for Police, and for related legal areas such as handling of domestic violence and sexual assault, which has become very much a specialised area of interpreting, treated further below.

Unlike in Victoria where there is a separate Legal Interpreting Service, the NSW EAC language services as a whole are indelibly identified with legal interpreting, which remain the core activity of the whole organisation. This provides the EAC with a solid and predictable basis of work, and a considerable influence on the legal system as a whole. NSW judges, for example, have been persuaded to undergo training in working with interpreters, and there has been collaboration with the legal system on such undertakings as the Fairfield project, which is currently monitoring access to interpreters and investigating organisational impediments in the use of interpreters in a local court in Western Sydney with a high number of cases involving NESB parties. This ongoing study reveals that a much smaller number of cases involving NESB parties have an interpreter than their overall number of cases would indicate was needed, and gives in some cases for the first time a quantification of unmet demands for interpreting. One suggestion arising from the research is that block bookings be made at court for interpreters in particular languages, so that cases involving the same language could be grouped to maximise the use of resources. This procedure, often used in the medical field, has generally not been trialed in courts. The NSW EAC together with others was also influential in the Law Society of NSW publication of a *Guide to Best Practice for Lawyers Working with Interpreters and Translators in a Legal Environment* (1996).

From these examples, we can see the relatively high standing of the NSW EAC in terms of legal interpreting. Unlike Victoria, there is no specific orientation for legal interpreting; the NSW EAC has however introduced a general Orientation Program for all new interpreters wishing to join the EAC's panel, run by a training unit and involving the participation of client agencies. The 3-day course gives an overview of the organisation, Access and Equity goals, kinds of interpreting encountered, as well as covering institutional housekeeping requirements and the task of representing the organisation as a whole. Candidates are assessed on their learning and must pass the course to be accepted onto the panel. Research is undertaken into the correlation between performance in this program and background variables, and future outcome variables for the candidates (NSW EAC 1995a). Regularity of these courses has however been a problem, with the inauguration of this course in 1995 but the next course only scheduled for 1998.

One further feature of EAC is that it has in recent years taken over all Auslan interpreter bookings for its institutions in the legal and administrative field thus mainstreaming Auslan as one language among others. This came about as the NSW Deaf Society, which previously used to control most Auslan interpreting services, deliberately wished Auslan to be mainstreamed into general public sector language services, putting out tenders for Auslan interpreting and then negotiating with the EAC. A similar move was made by the Deaf Society to health interpreting through HCIS, covered below.

As with VITS, State health interpreting services remain outside the realm of the EAC and are treated separately below.

On the translation side, in many ways the EAC provides a similar service to that of TIS, particularly in the translation of settlement documents. Such documents make up perhaps 90% of all translations. However, the EAC's translation unit has also had long experience in translation of State government brochures and information. While health translations tended to be done by the Health Translation Unit, the demise of that agency in 1995 means that more health translations will now be done by the EAC. Unlike Victoria, the NSW EAC does not see attracting commercial work as a priority, though even here boundaries and distinctions are not quite what they were: with an increase in corporatising of various government services, tendering out of public sector work etc, many functions previously seen to be in the public sector have now been changed, and some previous public sector clients may be now doing the same work as corporate or other entities, but needing translations as much or even more than they did before.

Organisationally, the EAC Language Services have recently been restructured into two sections – Operations and Quality Control. The intention of having a Quality Control division is to give a clear response to quality issues, ranging from issues of payment and organisational effectiveness, to responding to complaints, to looking at gaps in the service, to monitoring performance of interpreters in the field. Monitoring of interpreters in the field has hitherto been rare in Australia, and this innovation, introduced by the EAC in late 1995, will deserve to be watched in the future.

Another innovation worthy of comment has been the EAC's close involvement over the past few years in the areas of domestic violence and sexual assault, where it now provides a 24 hour service for interpreting. This involvement reflects the growing awareness among police, advocacy and welfare bodies in recent years of these issues. Close working between the EAC and other agencies has led to the production of videos and other resource materials dealing with these issues for interpreters, as well as in-services to other agencies on the use of interpreters in such situations. The issue of providing female interpreters is particularly sensitive in these areas, and the EAC now ensures this through its booking service for such cases (NSW EAC 1995b).

One distinct move of the NSW EAC that contrasts sharply with some other language services has been the tendency to increase the number of full-time I/T practitioners employed by the EAC. Some 18 I/Ts are employed full-time, and negotiations are continuing over the future status of other contractors who work largely or exclusively for the EAC. These full-time employed practitioners are explicitly interpreters or translators, and are drawn from the languages most in demand. Their role is seen as practitioners rather than as 'Professional Officers' of the TIS model: while some are engaged in training and publicity and quality control, the majority are pure practitioners, and are not involved in extensive administration. The EAC sees the appointment of full-time staff as contributing to quality service and as enhancing professionalism among the staff. The EAC sees I/T work as a career, and publicises career prospects widely, including to secondary students who are also accommodated at the EAC for work experience. It advertises all positions and monitors the English language skills of all potential members of its panel. Clearly, the EAC sees its service as having a long-term future and its practitioners as having a career structure.

The EAC demands accreditation at the Professional level for its practitioners, a requirement regarded as the bare minimum because of the high incidence of police and court work. As in an increasing number of agencies, the EAC now informs all clients if it is only able to provide an unaccredited interpreter (which is often the case in languages of low demand or in some peak periods even for accredited languages), which gives the client body requesting the interpreter the choice to accept or decline.

Finally, the EAC attempts to ensure fairness for all interpreters on its panel in the way it allocates jobs. It has designed an award-winning software package which ensures random distribution of jobs to all practitioners, and explicitly rejects the notion that particular practitioners should be favoured for particular kinds of work. It does recognise any special qualifications of its practitioners and these are factored into its data base, but all members of its panel with similar qualifications will have an equal chance of getting work. This system also ensures there is no favouritism at the level of the booking clerk. Practice on this matter differs widely among I/T agencies, with some favouring the very opposite model of concentrating work for those practitioners deemed most competent.

Issues for SAMEAC

South Australia's language services under the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission work in a much smaller State environment than either in Victoria or NSW. This smallness has meant that the two major public sector language services in SA (TIS and SAMEAC) are not faced with the sheer volume of work of the larger states, and have been able to construct extremely smoothly-functioning and comprehensive services, with a heavy emphasis on professionalism and the ability to plan for and reasonably control the issues they face.

SAMEAC as previously mentioned controls all State sector services; unlike Victoria and NSW, there is no separate State health language service, with hospital interpreting having also been brought under SAMEAC's control. With a system of cost-recovery in place from 1989, and government departments being free to purchase language services elsewhere, SAMEAC relies on its quality and reputation to hold its own against a small but active private market.

As noted earlier, SAMEAC has always had close connections with legal interpreting as a result of its origins in 1975 in the Attorney-General's Department, and as in NSW the practice has been established of the court booking interpreters and the interpreter being an interpreter for the court, not brought by one of the parties to a case. Perhaps one of the more unusual and public cases of interpreting arose in South Australia in relation to the only instance of a War Crimes trial in Australia, the Polyukhovich case which is described elsewhere in this report, the EAC finding itself in demand having, for example, the only Level 3 Ukrainian interpreter in Australia. This trial was another case where interpreters gained some public attention, and we look at this more closely below.

Like the NSW EAC, SAMEAC has favoured an establishment staff of full-time practitioners, currently seven positions covering the major languages of Chinese, Greek, Italian, Polish and Vietnamese. These full-time staff work as both interpreters and translators, as well as having functions of supervising contractors. SAMEAC as with similar agencies uses only accredited practitioners, except in the perennial case of rarer languages not currently accredited.

All new contract and staff interpreters must go through a structured orientation program of about 30 hours. The program is considered to be particularly important for those practitioners in the rarer languages for whom no training of any kind is provided elsewhere. The course is supplemented by on-going staff development, with some four to five in-services provided per year. Again there is encouragement for particularly the rare language practitioners to come to these.

The training issue as a whole presents a particular difficulty for SA in that the only Professional level I/T course at the former SA CAE closed down in the early 1990s. Despite this, by insistence on professional accreditation gained through test, and in some cases South Australians being trained elsewhere, the service now has a fully professional level panel of Interpreters in German, Greek, Italian and Polish, as they are with Adelaide TIS, and is nearing this in a number of other languages.

Despite Adelaide's relatively small size, considerable international trade takes place and SAMEAC has been heavily involved in both interpreting and translating for business purposes. The main languages needed here include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Italian, and the areas of business cover the gamut – from computer software to deer farming. Translations include numerous voice-overs and mixed media translations for the tourist industry. The proposed Multi Function Polis is also likely to generate future I/T work.

One reluctance noted by SAMEAC has been on the part of Australian companies and government departments going overseas on business to take their own interpreter, preferring always to rely on the interpreters provided for them by the other party. Even though this has often been pointed out, and the government agrees in principle this is wrong and something should be done, in fact this pattern continues. It was noted by SAMEAC officers that Chinese delegations to South Australia, for example, will always bring their own interpreter.

In terms of demarcation between business and community-oriented work, SAMEAC's officers are insistent on their place: 'If private agencies are allowed to come into our area then we should be allowed to go into theirs and not leave the business area exclusively to them. We have 20 years experience whereas the agencies have only been established within the last two to three years. Like any other enterprise we have to make our own living; we should be entitled to go out and find work.' Clearly, this distinction is emerging as the next major locus of repositioning for many language services.

On more local interpreting issues, SAMEAC has been involved in various ways in both Auslan interpreting and in Aboriginal languages. In SA there has been a parting of the ways over Auslan: up until 1993, Auslan interpreters worked for SAMEAC, but as a result of disputes over travel allowances, Auslan interpreters switched to work for the Deaf Society, a reminder of how even minor points of payment can be of great sensitivity to interpreters. SAMEAC has also provided interpreters in Aboriginal languages, a difficult exercise given distance, problems of training, and problems of mobility of practitioners and keeping interpreters in the field. However, interpreters in Aboriginal languages have been provided particularly in Coober Pedy and Port Augusta. To train for this, SAMEAC has run a course in Port Augusta jointly with the Adelaide TAFE Paraprofessional I/T course provider, and the courts.

Finally on professional issues, SAMEAC strongly supports moves to registration, believing it will help to regulate the profession as far as ethics, payments etc are concerned. But there is a worry over a system of registration if many rare languages are not accredited. SAMEAC believed that registration should not be confined to practitioners but also cover I/T agencies as well. SAMEAC officers reported there has been a general expansion of awareness in other professions about I/T accreditation. The only area of continued concern is that of finding practitioners in the rare languages, though SAMEAC has done its own finding here, for example following up on a school's contact with a Somali who turned out to be very well educated and effective as an interpreter, and that Somali now linking up with other Somalis to form a small team of interpreters that is now regularly used by many agencies. There has been a similar development in Russian over the past few years.

Issues for language services in health

As already noted, health care interpreting is the single largest domain of language service work in Australia, and the State language services that have arisen to meet this need are among the most complex. In South Australia as we have seen all public sector health interpreting comes under the SAMEAC, with backup if needed from TIS. In WA there are a small number of local hospital interpreters, but all else is covered by TIS, as is the case also in Queensland and Tasmania. But in Victoria and NSW, special provision is made for health.

Victoria, again, is by far the most complicated State in health interpreting. As we saw historically, a large number of agencies have at various times provided health care interpreting in Victoria:

- hospital interpreters employed as hospital staff
- the Central Health Interpreter Service, providing peripatetic services as a backup to the above
- a Mental Health Interpreter Service now under the umbrella of VITS
- after-hours, emergency or backup interpreters provided by TIS either on-site or by telephone
- some services provided by private agencies.

As part of ongoing rationalisation in this field, the Victorian government in 1996 instituted a study of possible ways of coordinating or reorganising this complex field.

Unlike Victoria, where the health scene is characterised by a considerable diversity of language service providers and different institutional arrangements, in NSW the Health Care Interpreter Service [HCIS] unites under one organisation a whole phalanx of different services:

- interpreters based substantially or full-time at a particular hospital or other health-care site
- peripatetic interpreters who attend particular health care institutions on a sessional or appointment basis
- on-call interpreters for single appointments

Moreover, the service has become a 24-hour service, thus able to draw on large numbers of practitioners after hours, and was able to attract back some previously after-hours TIS clientele in the health area.

Its comprehensive brief makes HCIS the largest language service in Australia after TIS. It is organised on a regional basis matching the Health Department's operational regions, with considerable autonomy for mix and development of services within each region. As in other States, while health interpreting has a long pedigree and has always been a major area of language services, the historical legacy of the build-up of language services has been an interpreter service whose practitioners vary greatly in accreditation and qualifications, in orientation to their work, in work practices that can vary from region to region or even between different institutions serviced, and in degrees of professionalisation. For HCIS, the issue has been how to transform one of the poorest paid, least resourced and least professionalised interpreting services into one meeting the needs of a modern and rapidly changing health care system

Moreover, the last few years have also seen increased demandingness on the part of the health system towards HCIS, and the growing need to address regional and specialised needs that previously were little regarded, or were simply too difficult to respond to. The extension of the HCIS system beyond the Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle metropolitan areas has now started to be addressed, through various combined efforts of TIS, HCIS, the NSW EAC and NAATI to provide some training and accreditation opportunities for outlying interpreters, particularly in the Hunter Valley (stretching inland from Newcastle). In recent years also HCIS has taken over all health-related Auslan interpreting from the Deaf Society.

The only other significant health-related language service in NSW has been the Health Translation Unit, which undertook major health translations and complemented the work of HCIS which itself had no translation brief. This Service was however closed in 1995 in favour of a broader-based Multicultural Health Literacy Service as described below.

In the much more fragmented Victorian situation, all health language services are feeling the consequences of rationalising and corporatisation moves by the State government that have already strongly affected other language services. CHIS in particular feels itself in a vulnerable position of being a specialised health language service in the present policy environment. It has a brief essentially to provide peripatetic services to supplement hospital interpreters and other *in situ* language services, and builds its reputation on having highly qualified staff familiar with a wide range of medical settings, and intense professional development work through in-services, training programs and training the user programs. It has around 30 full-time interpreters supplemented by several hundred sessionals. Yet the liberalisation of the language service markets and stress on rationalisation now places CHIS in a difficult position, where such a service based on a body of full-time practitioners may be seen as overly expensive. In early 1998 it announced a retrenchment of half a dozen of its full-time interpreters, the first such reduction in the agency's history.

Meanwhile, in the rest of the Victorian health system, we have much the same issues as we find in HCIS in NSW, with hospital interpreters having often quite varied status, role and treatment in various hospitals, with practitioners of varying accreditation and training and in some cases pursuing substantially different practices as interpreters. In some hospitals interpreters work in their own unit, with a recognised place in the hospital hierarchy, are professionally accredited and have a professional profile that does not differ in any way from, say, CHIS interpreters; in others, interpreters do substantially other duties but occasionally are called upon to interpret, have a view of a career as a more general hospital worker more than a career as an interpreter, have no or limited accreditation and perhaps no access to professional development.

Just how radical the changes have been in Victoria is well illustrated by the fate of the Mental Health Interpreter Service, a small independent specialist unit, when brought under the umbrella of VITS. Its staff of six full-time employees and many sessionals were rationalised into an all-sessional workforce, which thus provides a more economic service for the number of interpreting situations required. However, significant questions can be raised about the effects of removing full-time practitioners in terms of having a basis of expertise, professional supervision and development, training of new practitioners, advice to mental health service providers and general issues of quality control. As one small example, I/T students who once were placed in the MHIS to be supervised by full-time practitioners now cannot be placed; a situation repeated in all language services where there are now only sessional practitioners employed. Providing a 'service' is equated with providing an interpreter for a specific interpreting situation; no other aspect of service is considered important. In a situation with still such varying standards of individual practitioners,and with still such varying understandings of interpreters by users, reliance upon atomised sessional practitioners seems a recipe for lack of quality control and eventual lack of professionalism more generally.

Many of the issues affecting health interpreting are to a large extent outside the hands of health interpreters and language services themselves, but relate very much to significant policy shifts that are affecting Australia's health system as a whole. Massive restructurings and a deliberate policy of scaling down public hospital and other health services present difficult to predict issues, but carry an almost universal imperative to rationalise services. So far, commitments to language services appear to have been maintained, but it is probably unwise to assume this will be the case in future. In a situation where each hospital needs to find greater efficiency, the temptation to see NESB patients as too 'inefficient' in terms of making extra demands on resources may be overwhelming. Moreover, in contrast to the legal field, where there has been a slowly heightening interest in the whole legal field in communication issues and in interpreting, in the health field there seem to be few prominent decision-makers wanting to champion language services.

On the other hand, it is significant that in this policy environment governments, even conservative rationalising governments, have stressed their commitment to language services for NESB clients. In Victoria, for example, the government has strongly asserted its responsibility to provide language services to NESB Victorians with a series of booklets in October 1995 from its Ethnic Affairs Unit outlining policy frameworks and guides to government departments and funded agencies (Victoria. Ethnic Affairs Unit 1995a, b). In NSW, while the Health Translation Service was closed in 1995 there is now a Multilingual Health Literacy Service; there has also been expansion on other fronts with the HCIS expanded to provide a 24-hour service and extending its reach beyond the major metropolitan areas. In Victoria, decisions about I/T services in hospitals needed to be made in relation to new Casemix funding formulae, which allotted monies to hospitals on the basis of specified costs for particular procedures. The government, aware that servicing NESB patients would be more expensive if costs of I/T services were involved, and the Casemix formulae could be a disincentive to service NESB patients, took the costs of I/T services out of the formulae and allotted them to hospitals in relation to number of NESB patients serviced. The Centre for Ethnic Health (1994) and Plimer and Candlin (1996) have discussed the complexities of costing I/T services in relation to Casemix.

Opinions tend to be divided over where and how language services should be costed and funded in relation to increasingly formulaic hospital funding. The concern is first that language services should not be 'forgotten' in relation to such formulae, and beyond that to guard against the previously mentioned disincentives to take on NESB patients if this is perceived to raise costs. On the other hand, some more precise formulaic approaches may tend to work in favour of interpreters. For example, with each hospital readmission costing potentially several thousand dollars, and with such figures being carefully monitored, any wrong discharges, diagnoses or treatment as a result of of not using language services or of miscommunication between patients and health workers will be carefully scrutinised; there may well be incentives to use interpreters correctly the first time to avoid this. As a spin-off, cost formulae may provide us for the first time with some reasonable quantification of what it costs to *not* use language services in particular instances in health care.

Health remains the most unpredictable and rapidly changing field, and in both NSW and Victoria a ceaseless round of reviews have taken place on all aspects of health language services.

In NSW the Health Translation Unit closed in 1995 as a result of changing priorities in communication with clients and a belief that translations alone were not servicing present communication needs. It was certainly a unique service, being almost the only specialist government-funded translation service operating for a specific area; the only other example perhaps being the former DSS translation unit (now also terminated). The Health Translation Unit ran as a very small office of translation managers, who in time did increasingly less of the translation work themselves, working with a very large team of contract translators.

Its status was ensured first by a very elaborate checking system for its translations, institutionalising checking of translations as part of house procedures long before this became a common practice in other translation agencies; and secondly by its publication of a register of translations done, widely circulated among other language services and health care organisations within NSW and interstate, which meant that agencies could often find an already translated document that suited their needs rather than having a text translated again (Chesher 1988).

The place of translations (largely though never exclusively understood as written translation) in the context of overall information and communication strategies started to be questioned and alternatives identified in the early 1990s. One concern has been the relation between translations and literacy, with a growing emphasis on other media to communicate health information particularly to those with poor literacy skills in their own language. Another concern was the long-standing and seldom-answered question on the spread and effectiveness of translations, a matter notoriously difficult to quantify and properly evaluate. Significantly, much of the work of the translation unit, but with a more information-oriented approach, has been renewed with the creation in 1997 of a new Multicultural Health Communication Service by the Health Department. The brief of this service is to provide multilingual information on health services across a range of media and outlets, and assist in community liaison on heath issues as well as translation of information.

In Victoria, a comprehensive review of all State health interpreting commitments including those in mental health, hospital interpreting, CHIS and services provided by all public and private sector agencies began in 1996. An issue paper released in 1997, heavily influenced by cost considerations and reducing unit costs, urged greater coordination of health language services and set out several possible options, leaning towards a NSW style area-based delivery of language services and allowing funding decisions on which agencies to use to be decided by health areas, foreshadowing radical changes to the present organisation of agencies particularly for CHIS and hospital interpreters (Intercom 1997), though final recommendations were not to hand at the time of publication of this report.

Language services: concluding comments

1. The development of the entire field of I/T in Australia has had as we have seen several distinct origins and motivations, but the role of public authorities has been perhaps the most crucial ingredient. The assumption that language services should be provided in dealings between public institutions and NESB clients has never been rejected, and is in most cases affirmed still as strongly by governments and authorities today as a decade or two ago. However, subtle changes and shifts in perspectives are now very much a part of the agenda of public authorities, and corporatisation or privatisation are now openly pursued in some cases.

We have thus seen steady changes that have been undergone in the presumption of provision of I/T by public authorities – from direct provision of services to mainstreaming responsibility to pay for language services with all departments, to allowing them to tender widely for their language services. This has led in some cases to quite radical repositioning of public sector services.

2. The earlier view that all services of relevance to public authorities should be provided by public sector services has slowly changed. The original rationale for public sector provision – based on a stress on equity and responsibility for NESB clients, service provision for settlement and sometimes concern about exploitation – has been slowly eroded by views of the limits of public sector provision, plus the persistence of the private sector that is now challenging for service provision. The earlier model of service envisaged it as coming from a more or less centralised source – a public sector language service. Now, each public sector agency, in needing to identify its language service needs, should be free to find the kind of service most suitable to itself, so that at most levels there has been a retreat from the view that public sector agencies should get their language services from public sector providers. A typical way that this has proceeded is now for some government authorities to tender out their language services work, an increasingly common feature particularly in Victoria, where a number of public sector language service tenders have gone to private companies. The question then goes on further to questions above all of quality control and professionalism.

3. This move has come hand in hand with access and equity assumptions – in this case, that all departments are responsible for access and equity measures in relation to servicing NESB clients; that this should not be a responsibility of one provider, whether the Department of Immigration at one level or a State language service.

Governments quite understandably have been reluctant to let go all controls and strictures on use of language services: the presumption of having to use language services is still very much in force; but right from the start of cost-recovery at various levels (particularly with TIS) we have begun to have the fall-out of cost-recovery as some agencies will warn their staff not to use certain language services that recover costs. Warnings of the return to the bad old days of using family members or only local bilingual to do interpreting tend to be more common now in discourse in this area. On the other hand, the culture of providing language services has taken hold and it would be difficult for public enterprises at least to really fail to provide interpreting: as the 1994 TIS evaluation found:

> Research and anecdotal evidence suggest reluctance by some agencies to provide professional interpreting assistance to clients because of cost. However, surveys carried out of the Evaluation indicate that, while most agencies are opposed to full cost-recovery, if it were applied there would be no general decrease in demand for TIS. (TIS 1994: 22)

Meanwhile, salience of the private sector has steadily increased and will continue to increase with present policies. In some cases there has been mention that eventually private agencies may replace all public sector providers, but the robustness and considerable service development on the part of public sector agencies does not indicate any desire to evacuate the field; quite the contrary, the public sector agencies are all very much determined to stay – each with its own emphasis and approach to work, each mindful of the increasingly competitive field, but each seeing itself as essential for maintaining guarantees of access to services, as well as providing input into government policy development.

Chapter 6

Issues of accreditation, training and the profession

The previous chapter identified a number of contemporary issues for I/T services in Australia. This chapter looks at issues surrounding accreditation, training and the profession.

NAATI and accreditation

The role of NAATI is still extraordinarily central to the whole field of I/T, probably more central than its status – essentially, an accreditation body – would in the normal course of events suggest. But in relation to the I/T field in Australia there is perhaps no 'normal' course of events. NAATI is central to the field because in terms of development of the field, guidelines for action and degree of influence, it is not simply the most important player but almost the *only* national player in the I/T field. While particular language services (especially TIS) have an important national role in service provision, other aspects of the I/T field are still less developed than one might have expected from Blewett's encouraging words nearly a decade ago. The profession, training courses, other bodies with an interest in I/T are struggling to even hold their present place, let alone become significant forces in I/T. As the profession has not developed as robustly as expected, as other aspects of the I/T field have not reached prominence, NAATI remains the only body that government and others can call upon for advice, for leadership, for action of various kinds – even action often quite removed from NAATI's explicit concerns – and of course, for blame.

Simply, NAATI is asked to solve everything – from lack of interpreters in certain languages, to ethics and behaviour of interpreters, to training, to adequacy of services, to complaints to Members of Parliament from aggrieved candidates or aggrieved clients. It is also from time to time asked to involve itself in other issues related to languages but which are a long way from I/T concerns. Being 'owned' by the federal and State governments means they will make specific and in some cases contradictory demands on NAATI, as responsible ministers or their representatives vary widely in their own needs but, even more crucially, in their knowledge and understanding of I/T issues. We have already seen the diversity of response to I/T issues on the part of various State governments.

NAATI thus faces a policy environment that is more threatening to itself as an organisation and to the enterprise of I/T as a whole. For NAATI itself, there are increasing demands from its owners for it to perform in certain ways but these are often contradictory or unrealisable. More broadly in the policy area, there are worries about commitment to I/T on part of governments: the demise of particular language services or courses and a perceived move away from centralised interest in quality and standards to an emphasis on fees, commercial models, etc represent a concern for an accreditation body when many basic issues of standards and professionalism have not been resolved.

Of most frustration to NAATI perhaps is the contrast between the domestic front, characterised by increasing strangulation of resources and heightened and sometimes impossible demands, and the international front where Australia has gained particular prominence in the I/T field, such as prominence at the Canada conference in 1995, the staging of the International Federation of Translators [FIT] Congress in Melbourne in 1996 and increasing note of Australian developments in international literature. This growing prominence internationally seems to come at the same time as an inability to see potential for I/T and NAATI on the part of authorities here.

Apart from macro-wrangles over ownership or overall federal/State politics, several persistent demands for action arise from the very logic of NAATI's activities. These include the demand for accreditation in more languages in more locations, and the demand to continue to develop the profession, particularly in terms of specialisms being added to basic accreditation: an issue linked to that of registration and control of the profession.

The demand of accreditation in more languages in more locations should be regarded as a 'normal' demand for NAATI; after all, it is the basic *raison d'etre* of the authority. Yet there are particularly difficult problems ahead in this. While there is a constant demand to add new languages to those accredited, the financial implications need to be noted: every new language added (given they will have relatively small numbers of candidates) may lose money for NAATI in the present test format. Moreover, as the languages requiring accreditation become the less commonly used languages, there are problems not only with having few candidates but also with being able to constitute a panel of competent individuals with a command of that language and understanding of I/T. Given that a good deal of NAATI's limited self-generated income comes from its testing program, providing tests for more languages that do not make any profit for NAATI must be considered carefully, and is one of the consequences of NAATI becoming heavily reliant upon revenue from its testing program; equity in terms of language provision will be costly. It should be noted that NAATI now tests in over 50 languages, having recently added languages such as Amharic, Assyrian and Somali to its list, and the languages available for accreditation cover well over 98% of the language demand.

There have been suggestions that testing for such less commonly used languages may be carried out overseas; NAATI's response to this has been that it first of all wants to ensure standards of performance relevant to the Australian situation, and examiners must be familiar with the specifics of Australian I/T and Australian accreditation standards. Such a response however will be increasingly difficult to sustain; the alternative to overseas involvement is to have no or long delayed accreditation. On one occasion one agency itself had made contacts with a New Zealand institution dealing with Pacific Island languages which expressed interest in helping in this field; this was enthusiastically reported to NAATI but not taken up. Nothing will reduce NAATI's standing in the field more than rejecting moves that show a serious commitment to improving standards and the accreditation process.

NAATI has recently moved to offer accreditation in more locations, starting in 1995 with a joint program with the NSW EAC and TIS to provide some test preparation for candidates in the Hunter Valley, and has done much to revive accreditation and training in Aboriginal languages again, as detailed below.

On the question of sufficient accreditations in sufficient locations, both the criticisms levelled at NAATI and NAATI's response have now a rather repetitive and almost ritual air. Even more ritual is the standard response of NAATI to any issue on I/T – 'use accredited interpreters!', coupled with the demand to understand NAATI's essentially restricted role: that NAATI is not a training authority; that NAATI's task is not to go and find interpreters where none have come forward for accreditation; that NAATI cannot do anything about poor interpreters (even if they are accredited).

Significantly on some issues such as Aboriginal languages, covered in the next chapter, NAATI has recognised such a restricted role for itself is not appropriate.

Quality in interpreting is an issue of course for all agencies, not NAATI alone, and we have seen in previous chapters the way many agencies have taken on issues of quality. However two issues re accreditation are fundamental: first, studies have shown the very high use still of paraprofessional accredited interpreters even by agencies that claim to use mostly professionally accredited interpreters (see the discussion below of Athanasiadis & Turner's 1994 study). Present use patterns for example in large agencies like TIS still show many paraprofessional interpreters are used – often when it has been difficult to find professionally accredited interpreters. The question of providing the means for paraprofessional practitioners to achieve higher levels of accreditation is an acute one.

The second issue re accreditation is that there appears to have been a threshold reached in testing and accreditation levels that has been static for a long time, while the field demands higher standards. The present accreditation tests overall have not changed since they first began in 1980. A one-off test concentrating on interpreting skills (done on tape) is the standard format and has remained constant; a short section of questions on ethical/professional issues has been incorporated into the test as well. The translation tests have a similar format for their discipline, but it is the interpreting tests that draw the most concern. It should of course be remembered what the original tests were designed to do – largely, to test then already active practitioners and to accredit them at their particular level of linguistic performance. One could assume of most of those sitting those first tests that they had considerable familiarity with the field, and their relatively high success rates (certainly compared to present very low success rates) would seem to attest to that.

The first question here is whether a test that ratifies active practitioners is suitable for those who come into the field without experience? It would seem that an overwhelming proportion of candidates now have little experience in the field apart from having done some quite informal interpreting. As I/T agencies will now generally demand accreditation, there is little scope for unaccredited people to get extensive experience before they sit the NAATI test. People can literally have no understanding of the field and sit for the tests. The high failure rates have led to the introduction of workshops for candidates, where often presenters find themselves addressing quite rudimentary concerns of candidates totally unfamiliar with the demands of interpreting. A nice example of the attraction of NAATI tests to the completely inexperienced occurred in Victoria in 1997 after the unfortunate advertisement by DSS, referred to in the last chapter, which stipulated 'Level 2' as the minimum level of appointment as a DSS interpreter; NAATI's Victoria Office was flooded with requests from candidates to sit the Paraprofessional test. Presumably the failure rate of such candidates will be high and only those most competent will gain accreditation, but this makes the whole accreditation process bizarre.

The second question is whether in any professional areas accreditation standards should remain constant over the years or should indeed become more demanding? Many other professions which may have been in a similar position to I/T in having none or very low accreditation levels a decade or two ago have systematically increased their accreditation standards ***and continue to do so.*** Bookkeepers and accountants for example face a steadily escalating set of tasks in order to achieve accreditation each decade; in that context, campaigns by the profession for example to urge people to use Certified Practicing Accountants can be mounted with confidence that the field is improving its standards. Yet in interpreting, it is very difficult to assert that the standard of accreditation has improved. Moreover, as NAATI increases the spread of languages and attracts more candidates in rarer languages, there are crucial issues of professional formation that cannot and should not be left to the results of a one-off test.

Overwhelmingly, agencies that comment on interpreters in the rarer languages have two areas of concern – the lesser but oft-expressed concern is about English language abilities of these interpreters; the major and overwhelming concern however is in the interrelated areas of ethics, role and contextual and institutional knowledge that mark competent interpreting performance. Many interpreters in the rare languages (and not in those languages alone) are found wanting in these areas. Yet the one-off test is a poor judge of these qualities; moreover, it seems that it is precisely these candidates – and their eventual employers and users – who would benefit from supplementing tests with some kind of professional training or professional induction. This is not to demand an end to testing and replacement by training – a precarious proposition given present training problems. However, it is now possible technologically and logistically to speak of real alternatives – for example, making it a part of accreditation testing that every candidate at the paraprofessional and professional levels not only sits the test, but undertakes a specified unit on ethics and professional issues. Such units are part of present Professional and Paraprofessional training programs, but could importantly also be offered as stand-alones in other cities, or through distance education mode. This would mean increasing the charges for candidates to do this training and sit the test (though it might be possible to find some support for this), but this increase would be warranted by having candidates of far higher professional preparedness. It would act to improve the quality of candidates in their work in the field after accreditation; it would also see the rapid disappearance of those candidates not able to make the effort in learning. Wider expansion of distance education offerings also could make it possible to phase out testing in languages regularly offered in training. Other alternatives could also be imagined.

It would seem time for NAATI to reconsider whether the present accreditation testing is meeting the high demands placed on it, and whether improvement of its format would be warranted. The suggestions above have been made by a number of concerned groups over the years.

There is at least some movement on one other issue linked to accreditation. NAATI has had in recent years a number of demands, which it basically welcomes, to look at the issue of post-accreditation specialisms, something that it regards as vital to the future development of the profession. These demands come from a number of sources. On the one hand, certain professions such as the legal profession have taken an increased interest in the field of interpreting; significant publications such as Laster and Taylor (1994) have raised jurisprudential awareness of I/T issues, and close cooperation between I/T bodies and bodies such as the Law Council of NSW have led to guides to good practice (Law Council of NSW 1996). Meanwhile, health interpreting and legal interpreting continue to be identified (in some cases exclusively) as areas needing attention in government reports of various kinds. A typical example comes from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs, in its report *A Fair Go for All* (1996), which claimed community concern over the standards of I/T and specifically targeted the health and legal areas, leading to its recommendation:

> 7.42 Given the extent of community concern about translating and interpreting standards, the Committee recommends that:
>
> a) NAATI should develop specialist training for accredited interpreters and translators in legal and health settings... (Australia. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs 1996: 96)

Other recommendations urged NAATI to ensure that regional and dialectical variations are catered for, and for quality assurance programs to be introduced.

It should be noted that such demands come not only from active interest by some professional or government institutions, but come also for reasons of default: in particular, the lack of progress on a scheme of registration, leading inevitably to pressures for NAATI to take on a further role of endorsing specialisms, a role not in its original charter, and one that could be far better dealt with by a registration body, but one now increasingly demanded by everyone.

As previously detailed, the issue of registration has found little support from government, and indeed the political climate, especially with the new federal Liberal government of 1996, has been towards deregulation of the industrial area including the area of professional registration. The question of registration for Interpreters and Translators now awaits the outcomes of a regulatory impact statement and a consultancy on the need for registration. Meanwhile, in this vacuum, NAATI has worked on developing possible models of specialisms, related to what a viable registration scheme might ultimately look like, but keeping in mind also what an adequate system of quality control might be if registration is ***not*** achieved.

A related issue that has involved NAATI in conflict with AUSIT is just who could and should be the registration body if registration were to be introduced. Both bodies see registration as essentially building on the basis of NAATI accreditation; both bodies see registration as a matter separate from accreditation, and one that should be handled by a separate administration with strong professional representation, able to independently consider issues of registration. However, AUSIT is concerned lest NAATI should become the registration body, even though NAATI has never wanted to have this role. As for professional development, AUSIT sees itself as having a major role here, and in future would like to see issues of professional development related to AUSIT membership itself, finally bringing about it is hoped a profession that is committed to a continual improvement of its own standards.

Post-accreditation specialist endorsement provides a link here to any future scheme of registration, yet it is an issue that takes NAATI into essentially new ground, as it departs from the notion of accreditation as a generalist qualification, and for further specialisms to be essentially the business of the profession or a registration board.

Yet whatever the reasons, positive or negative, for its encouragement, the prospect of adding specialisms to accreditation has the potential to be the most significant innovation in this area since the introduction of accreditation itself. Moreover, it also brings to the fore issues of professional development, which has been little looked at in I/T in Australia, and gives a new handle on the issue of registration: a good system of post-accreditation specialisms and professional development may not only lay the foundation for a registration system, but may of themselves provide an adequate alternative if registration does indeed never come about.

On the issue of specialisms, NAATI is adamant that they can only be built on the basis of generalist accreditation, not be a substitute for it: that is, NAATI does not approve of providing specific accreditation in say legal or health interpreting at a basic professional level, which has been a model adopted in some cases elsewhere (court interpreters in the USA being a prime example). NAATI views a generalist interpreting or translating accreditation as being the most appropriate basic qualification in the Australian situation, and in the light of the potential careers of practitioners. Most basically, it views interpreting or translating skills as being generic; the skills of legal interpreters and medical interpreters, say, exhibit far more in common than in how they differ; a professional interpreter needs to have the basis for operating in both, and in many other areas as well, even though some interpreters may indeed specialise. Moreover, in the Australian market, the more rare the language of the practitioner, the less likelihood of being able to specialise.

NAATI's model is that specialisms come explicitly ***after*** a generalist accreditation, possibly on a model of 'endorsements'; practitioners with professional accreditation will be able to receive specialist endorsement for particular areas of expertise. This will not be given on the basis merely of claiming experience in a particular area, but on the basis of passing a specified course of study or program of continuing professional development. Given the problems of working out suitable training, and given until now the general paucity of professional development opportunities, working out a suitable model of endorsements may not be easy. A series of meetings in 1996/7, involving wide representation from I/T and other professional interests, discussed these issues with a view to developing post-accreditation specialisms as quickly as possible in the health and legal areas. The one difficult question that quickly emerged - what to do in languages or in regions where there are not interpreters already accredited at the Professional level - will remain a major issue to resolve. While many would like to see this specialism as building upon Professional level accreditation (in languages where that is obtainable), particular objections to this have been raised by those practitioners not so much in the less common languages that are not yet accredited, but by those long-serving practitioners who do not have Professional level accreditation in languages in which such accreditation has long been available, but who insist they also should be entitled to receive specialist endorsement, thus substantially changing the purpose of this envisaged exercise.

Finally, it needs to be reiterated that post-accreditation specialism training must not be considered a solution to present overall concerns about the present standards of accreditation itself. As previously argued, these accreditation standards must themselves be constantly improved, so that specialisms can build on ever-growing competence, and by tied in to a dynamic framework of professional development.

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This description of NAATI and its present policy predicaments reveal that, from one perspective, NAATI seems to be overwhelmed by the number and complexity of the issues that it almost alone is seen as capable of solving. Especially in a situation of a still weak profession, and varying commitments for governments, demands on NAATI are likely to continue to be heavy but often erratic or even contradictory. From another perspective, however, NAATI's present policy predicaments are also a sign of its own past success - in establishing itself as the dominant player and certainly as the chief object of criticism for anything that is wrong with I/T in Australia.

In the last few years there have been a series of 'reviews' of NAATI which have not gained general release - one by Eyres & Ireland, another by Coopers & Lybrand, and given their non-publication it is difficult to divine the trajectory of their influence on NAATI direction. There have been some suggestions, even from within the ranks of NAATI's owners, that the body needs to be radically reformed, perhaps by divesting it of its testing and professional development role and turning it more into a policy advice and leadership body (Kerkyasharian & Themal 1992), but it is not clear the extent to which this view has been promoted by the reviews. The difficulty of discerning the effect of these reviews may attest to two bedrock realities that the reviews have had to struggle with. First, there are no easy and certainly no cheap ways of performing the range of tasks NAATI has been asked to perform. The complexity of the field, the difficulty of dealing with so many languages, regions and different institutions, make it difficult to introduce wholesale changes into NAATI, without significant changes to other parts of the I/T field. Secondly, if these reviews were intended to be efficiency audits and those commissioning the reviews had hoped that the reviews would identify inefficiencies in the NAATI system, spare capacity etc, they were unable to find that. The impact of the Eyres & Ireland review remains difficult to detect; the Coopers & Lybrand review did lead to a 3-year business plan which basically has given NAATI more tasks to perform - accredit in more languages, in the country, look after the profession, develop registration etc - within the same overall budget. NAATI's tasks have increased much faster than its resources in recent years.

The profession

It was argued earlier that essentially authority-driven models of I/T provision are not dependent upon an existent I/T profession, and indeed in such models of I/T provision, there may not be the development of such a profession which is taken for granted in international conference interpreting or technical translation. It was one of NAATI's original missions to prepare for a strong I/T profession which would take over many of NAATI's original functions, but the time frame originally envisaged (five years) was ludicrously short, and the question now is whether at any stage the I/T profession will be able to take on the larger role envisaged for it.

AUSIT, established with such hopes in 1987, still struggles to become the recognised voice of I/T practitioners. It has difficulties in meeting its own objectives in relation to uniting practitioners, in influencing policy and other developments in I/T, and most of all in representing its members with a clear voice on a whole host of industrial and service issues that confront them. AUSIT in the mid-1990s has around 700-800 members, with quite wide fluctuations from State to State in membership. Its membership fee has been an extremely low $60 per annum recently raised to $70. In terms of size and priority in the field it has no serious competitor or alternative, and wherever discussion is held on I/T issues AUSIT will be represented in some capacity. But the fragmented nature of I/T provision and practitioners, and the minute details of the issues confronting practitioners, make it difficult for AUSIT to be effective in a number of situations. Two examples will suffice here.

First, AUSIT has never seen itself as an industrial body, and in the quite complex organisation of industrial relations in Australia, this leaves AUSIT outside some of the nitty-gritty of industrial bargaining and positioning. From 1994 disputes flared in Victoria between practitioners and State language services, particularly CHIS and VITS, over proposals to alter rates of pay and basis of payment. Historically, as a result of previous industrial action and different policies operating in State and private services, VITS and CHIS were paying their sessional practitioners in most cases more than private agencies: for example, VITS paid $61.20 for a minimum 2-hour assignment, considerably above most private agencies that often paid around $40. Given however that the public language services were being restructured, that government institutions were becoming free to choose their own providers, and that there would be competition between State and private language services, the State services saw themselves at a disadvantage in this competition if they paid higher rates than private competitors. However, moves to restructure rates of pay ran into solid opposition from practitioners. AUSIT tried to represent its members on this issue, but ran into difficulties as it is not a registered industrial relations body nor does it necessarily have expertise in industrial relations bargaining. In Victoria this dispute finally achieved some resolution only when a union – the Health Services Union, which has a number of interpreters as its members – entered negotiations. After a long struggle pay rates were finally altered by VITS in late 1996, though the issue has again flared since then: clearly, industrial issues will continue to gain salience in I/T in Australia.

This dispute, whose local details do not directly concern us here, shows the volatility of the issues that now face practitioners and the profession as greater rationalisation and competition of services threatens conditions. In this context, AUSIT has an uneasy existence. Wanting explicitly to be a professional association rather than a union or industrial relations body, in some conflicts and negotiations this will leave it relatively marginalised. Within AUSIT there is a marked diversity of opinions among members as to the role it should play, from those who see it as potentially *the* industrial representative of all I/T practitioners, to those who see it as a professional association only with no direct industrial role. These differences of opinion also made it difficult for AUSIT to pursue a consistent line in negotiations it was involved in. Few AUSIT members have experience of Australia's rather bruising industrial relations mechanisms. A final reminder of the difficulties here came in 1996 when the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] (formerly Trade Practices Commission), a federal body charged with promoting competition and eliminating monopolistic practices, wrote to AUSIT about its publicised recommended schedule of fees, warning that such recommendations go against trade practice legislation. Interestingly, around the world some other professional organisations have also been challenged for monopolistic tendencies, particularly AIIC. In the situation of Australia, where AUSIT has nothing like a monopoly, where it has virtually no power to enforce any recommended fees at all, and certainly no industrial muscle, such a charge seems quite ludicrous and much more suggestive that other motives are at work for those who would recommend the ACCC look at interpreting.

A second example of AUSIT's difficulties relates to getting itself the resources needed to establish itself as an effective professional association. While NAATI continues to provide some support for its activities, AUSIT's low membership fee leads to the inevitable downward spiral of low resources leading to few services to its membership leading to more questioning of the benefits of membership. This is of course a predicament faced by many other professional associations in this field internationally. Some proposals have come up from time to time to greatly increase membership fees to provide a better service, but the generally lowly paid members are little inclined to accept this.

While industrial relations remains an area of limited AUSIT effectiveness, and its own lack of resources is still an obstacle, the association has nevertheless been active on a number of other fronts, and given its limited membership and financial resources, has been able to maintain a serious presence in the I/T field. First, in consultation with NAATI it has developed a Code of Ethics, released in June 1996, which will provide a basis for ethical and professional conduct, not least to inform other professions and institutions that work with interpreters. Secondly, its new journal *Antipodes* will provide a valuable source of information and opinion, with articles of far wider interest than for Australian practitioners alone. Thirdly, AUSIT has been working hard on one of the most intractable problems in I/T in Australia: the place of lesser used languages in the structures of I/T. With growing diversity of immigration and refugee intakes, language demands now occur for an ever-increasing range of languages, for which it seems unlikely that there will ever be appropriate accreditation, training or concomitant professional standards. A project on Level 3 equivalence, ie trying to identify equivalent measures of I/T competence among practitioners in lesser used languages has involved both AUSIT and NAATI.

Finally on professional issues, it should be noted that Australia lacks any industry body for I/T. The fragmentation that affects the I/T profession also acts to keep employers and those who run agencies apart. There is no information about the industry as a whole, and no structure to allow the kinds of information-gathering, benchmarking, lobbying and promotional work that industry bodies typically engage in.

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Australia had of course set itself a difficult standard to achieve, by adopting a model of professional interpreting, based upon a system of accreditation, language services and training, to cover around 100 languages used in the community. Blewett's invitation to celebrate the striking achievements that had been put into place by 1987 indeed reflected the considerable provision and invention that had been achieved by this time, and marked Australia's system of I/T, for all its faults, as a world leader. However, on professional issues at least, the next decade has been less forthcoming than might have been hoped.

The work of two further authors here can be contrasted to Blewett's optimism. The first is Jean Shannon, then of DILGEA and working on the task group looking at the feasibility of a centralised national language services bureau being considered in the early 1990s. In a paper she delivered at AACLAME's 'Language is Good Business' conference in 1990, she saw a national bureau as a circuit-breaker: a circuit-breaker precisely for the historical vicious circle that has bedevilled I/T services and indeed the whole profession, of poor esteem begetting low self-esteem on the part of practitioners begetting low commitment to the profession begetting lack of professional development begetting poor professional status and remuneration begetting poor esteem... While she refers specifically to TIS, her comments can apply to many public sector language services

> The TIS service was created in the spirit of a voluntary organisation to meet an immediate "welfare need". As such, the culture within the organisation as well as the pervading attitude of many of our contract staff is one of altruism...[but] the continuance along a 'charity' mentality has done nothing for the growth of the service, its efficiency or the enhancement of the profession. (Shannon 1991:84)

The example she gives of the vicious circle is why interpreters do not command a decent return for their service: the excuses are:

(a) there isn't enough money in the barrel because
(b) we can't charge clients because it will be a disincentive to use the services so
(c) interpreters don't/can't ask for more because
(d) they know there's only so much money in the barrel and
(e) they believe that they won't get the work because clients won't pay (Ibid).

This is the vicious circle to be broken. In particular, the nature of the field has led to constant turnover in practitioners and constant training of new staff for short tenure. A real profession has not evolved, nor are practitioners paid what they are worth.

Shannon's passionate analysis of the field points to crucial links between professional aspects and organisational integrity. Of particular concern is the part-time nature of the whole field, where part-timers (pensioners, students, housewives) are often the practitioners, a clear concern also of the professional body AUSIT. Shannon sees it necessary to build structures that can give careers to full-time, committed practitioners, who would be committed to a service selling itself to the community and expanding its body of clients.

Since Shannon spoke, most language services have moved to varying degrees of cost recovery, corporatisation etc as outlined earlier in this report. Yet despite – or perhaps because of – these moves to identify and recover costs and place language services on a different business basis, the professional issues are far from being solved, and currently morale is probably as low in the I/T profession as it has ever been. Partly this relates to the general lack of real gains for individual practitioners either monetarily or in terms of status or their own development. Partly this in turn is a result of lowest-cost factors driving development: tendering out of services on a model of individual practitioners being able to act as individual professionals, but in fact offering the interpreters poor return for their efforts, not eliminating the part-timers who care nothing for the profession, and not offering anything to the profession in the way of registration or professional development.

A second author, Barry Turner (1995), sometime Regional Officer of NAATI and long-time I/T trainer and practitioner, has pointed very clearly at this lack of professionalism now even despite a long period of accreditation and training, and the particular challenges faced in a period of economic rationalism. Turner and his colleague Athanasiadis (1994) conducted a national study of major language services in Australia and examined the relation between service provision and accreditation levels of those providing the services. Only in those languages of highest demand, and only in the major states and cities, was the bulk of work being done by professionally accredited interpreters; much work even in relatively high demand languages was being done by paraprofessional or unaccredited interpreters, and virtually all work in languages of lesser demand was performed by unqualified practitioners. For example, in New South Wales for services provided by TIS, for the highest demand languages some 54% of interpreting assignments were performed by professionally accredited interpreters, dropping to 22% for the lowest demand languages.

In using the results of this survey to to focus on the profession, Turner suggests that

> the Australian model of a community-oriented interpreting and translating profession is only capable of providing a full-time living to a group of practitioners in languages at the top end of the demand categories and in major centres of population (Turner 1995: 99)

Such a conclusion shows that although Australia has set objectives of providing equitable and quality I/T services for all language groups,

> we have not been able to achieve these objectives to anything like a satisfactory standard and the possibility of ever doing so appears to be remote, to say the least (Ibid: 84)

Turner's conclusion is that Australia has 'a barely viable profession', and he suggests new approaches to technology, increased use of telephone and video interpreting and a return to the issue of a large centralised language service to be able to provide adequate professional standards for practitioners at least in high and medium demand languages and have some hope of raising standards in lesser used languages. On this analysis, one of the greatest threats to adequate professional standards is the small number of practitioners who can devote themselves full-time to their careers, a *sine qua non* of a profession.

Turner also sees TIS as a potential world resource, taking advantage of market opportunities and of Australia's considerable language resources to provide a service potentially for any other English-speaking situation, for trade and business or local community needs. This in turns echoes Shannon's concern to move away from welfarist models and to appreciate the wider potential of language services:

> If we focus on *migrant* needs and not the *language* needs of Australia, we will become marginalised in the new 'pragmatic' era. (Shannon 1991:86)

Issues for I/T Training

We have seen earlier the decline of I/T training at the professional level in several States over the last decade, leading to a situation where only in Sydney are courses at this level being run, with the University of Queensland continuing to offer an Advanced course in Japanese. The situation at Paraprofessional level as noted was much healthier, with courses in most State capitals running a national curriculum, and extending their teaching in some cases into new areas of training in indigenous languages.

The difficulties in training reflect the myriad other difficulties in the I/T field, but there are particular imperatives of tertiary education that have affected courses. Given that translation has never had a widely recognised place in Australian academia as part of language or literature courses, the specially designed tertiary courses introduced from the mid 1970s have been explicitly for professional training, which is the reason for NAATI's concern mentioned earlier that they not be simply part of a language course (eg as a major study in an otherwise general language/Arts degree). Reflecting international practice, I/T training and particularly Interpreting training demand a more intense level of contact than other language courses, but more intense (ie more expensive) courses of this kind are not easy for tertiary institutions to accept, and there are no economies of scale.

This report has mentioned the links between courses and their difficulties in surviving *vis a vis* the NAATI testing program. This situation is exacerbated by the recent increased tendency to run test preparation courses for NAATI tests, arising from employer concerns over upgrading the accreditation of their interpreters quickly, plus the high failure rates and general lack of understanding of the tests on the part of many candidates. In some cases these cram courses have been run in the same languages as standard I/T courses in the same city, an inexplicable duplication and again a serious tension between I/T courses and testing. However, it is important to understand that, while the testing programs and NAATI's attitude towards them are important, they are not the crucial factor in the decline of courses or their persistent problems. Indeed, while courses often complain both about the testing program and about other attitudes of NAATI as being detrimental to their work, the causes of problems for courses lie fundamentally elsewhere, both in the external milieu of I/T and within the courses themselves.

The external milieu affecting courses relates to the well known vicious circle that has plagued the I/T professions in Australia: low status of the profession leads to often low quality of candidates with consequent low commitment to professional careers in the field; low profile among academic disciplines leads to low status for I/T academics and low levels of commitment to developing their own career in I/T (eg by doing research and publishing in the area). Persistent problems of funding formulae and difficulties with student numbers in some languages have dogged all courses since their inception.

The outcome of this is that over the years courses have been running, except for a few languages in a few cities, courses have not provided the normal mode of entry for the profession, and they retain a marginal presence in the I/T field. The exceptions are significant: in some of the larger languages, there are numbers of graduates from the courses who continue to supply the profession not only with good practitioners but also, increasingly, with training officers and middle-level managers the field is very short of. Deakin University has run I/T courses in some 13 different languages, cycling them from year to year and gradually not offering languages in which there is an adequate supply of practitioners. But for many languages and in most cities, courses have not been an avenue for accreditation and professional development. The most significant factor here has been the placing of I/T courses into the structures of broadly arts/social sciences/education faculties, with funding formulae extremely antithetical to the kind of intense skills-building required in the courses. In many languages it has been impossible to justify classes with the low numbers of students to make a tertiary class possible. A major issue here is funding formulae, and despite constant pushing for better funding formulae by the courses and some independent reports (eg Ingleson 1989), I/T courses are still often funded at the same level as other courses around them or other language courses.

Other problems in courses relate to the knowledge base and degree of research among I/T course staff. I/T courses at Level 3 developed in Colleges of Advanced Education [CAE], well before recent moves for amalgamations and conversion into universities. They commenced with few educators having a background in I/T education: some were practitioners (usually translators), but many were language teachers or academics in other areas, and often safer in those areas than in the relatively new field of I/T education which, like the profession itself, in a very real way had to be 'invented'. There was also no strong research tradition elsewhere – here or overseas – on which they could draw, certainly for the type of interpreting practised in Australia, and only marginally for the kind of translations generally undertaken here. These academics, with typical CAE teaching loads, had to find the time and resources to construct the curriculum themselves. The job has hardly begun. Only recently have there appeared publications to overcome fundamental lack of curriculum materials and principled approaches, particularly in interpreting education, though some of these are now beginning to establish a sound theoretical and practical basis for curriculum development (Tebble 1992; Ginori & Scimone 1995, Gentile et al 1996; Hale 1996; Hale & Campbell 1997).

The other significant lack is that of research. There has never been a strong research tradition in this field, and even overseas research is heavily oriented to literary or technical translation and conference interpreting. Research particularly in interpreting has been slow to evolve, with the most significant steps yet the workshops on I/T research held by the Centre for Asian Languages and Studies inaugurated in Brisbane commencing in 1990, and the Macarthur conferences on research and teaching in I/T begun in 1993 (Hale & Campbell 1995; Hale & Campbell 1997). The Conference of the Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia [CITEAA] was held annually from 1978 to 1993, and has in recent years drawn more genuine research papers, but it has been held less frequently recently, reflecting the growing difficulties in I/T education.

Against this background of present problems however, in December 1995 20 years of training in I/T was celebrated at a seminar at Deakin University, to commemorate the inaugural professional interpreting course at RMIT in 1975. Along with TIS and accreditation, the few professional courses are long-term stayers and innovators in I/T in Australia. The demise of the Deakin course however shows that this tradition will not endure without substantial future support. Upon the closing of the Deakin course RMIT has indicated an interest in developing professional-level training to complement its already existing paraprofessional course, a possibility with considerable potential as links between Paraprofessional and professional level courses in the past have not been strongly forged.

Tertiary courses have tried various strategies to boost their courses. One initiative at the University of Western Sydney was to introduce ***non-NAATI accredited*** courses at Masters level from the early 1990s. A Master of Arts in Translation and Linguistics and in Interpreting and Linguistics have been innovative courses, attempting to provide a 'top end' to the profession but not tying themselves to NAATI accreditation, which was seen to impose too rigid a standard of course design and intensity of teaching and too demanding a level of student performance. The MA in Translation and Linguistics has been run in several languages, bringing together students concerned to improve their practical and theoretical understanding of translation and pursue research interests, without the demand to reach a particular standard of accreditation. While these courses have been relatively small, if allowed to develop they will begin to provide an important addition to I/T education in Australia. Taking a different course of action, Deakin introduced an MA in Translation in 1994, accredited at Advanced Translator level in Mandarin, but this course has had very few students. The very high entry level and the exacting nature of the final examinations has meant that few candidates are capable of satisfactorily completing the course. Following the lead of UWS, Deakin replaced this course with an unaccredited Master of Arts (Translation Studies) from 1997, retaining the accredited strand for Mandarin. This course has however also closed from the end of 1997, leaving this top level of I/T research training now dependent upon UWS.

In slightly different ways, both Deakin and UWS had to move away from the previous standard method of delivery of professional-level course, the BA(I/T). Deakin introduced a Graduate Diploma of I/T in 1988 but retained its BA(I/T) for languages for which there were still few graduates, but the University has scaled down further intakes of the BA(I/T) so that the course had no intakes in 1996 and 1997, leaving the Graduate Diploma in I/T. At UWS, in similar fashion low numbers put several languages of the BA(I/T) in jeopardy, and it has been decided to have no further intakes in the BA(I/T) but to introduce a Graduate Diploma of I/T in 1997. Deakin and the University of Western Sydney thus drew closer to each other in terms of kinds of offerings.

Two recent initiatives provide some new departures for both institutions. Both UWS and Deakin have looked at the potential for attracting overseas students: in 1992, Deakin drew a cohort of students from Indonesia, financed by the World Bank, in its Graduate Diploma of I/T, and is now marketing its courses overseas, having attracted over 60 overseas students since the early 1990s. It has also helped to set up an I/T course in Xiamen in China, working with a local university there. UWS has become interested in similar potential in Vietnam, establishing close contacts with several Vietnamese universities running I/T courses, and investing in reciprocal visits between the two countries. There appears to be considerable scope for post-graduate work directed at Asian candidates: in several Asian countries now, universities and teacher training colleges have set up translation courses (and in some instances interpreting courses) particularly in English. These courses are offered by academics who are English lecturers, but who in almost every case have no formal training at all in I/T. Australia is probably the only place in the world where they can gain relevant training in translation, interpreting and I/T pedagogy. Courses at the MA or even professional doctorate level could be relevant. In these countries too, practitioners are often eagerly sought for translation and interpreting, but there are no accreditation standards and virtually no training. In this presently totally unregulated and undeveloped market, Australian I/T education could be a drawcard for serious practitioners needing to gain higher proficiency.

Finally, UWS in particular has taken on board the issue of professional development, accelerating this interest in 1996 with a series of courses on aspects of I/T ranging from conference interpreting to ethics to legal interpreting. The strategic thinking being this is to recognise that there is at least as much need for upgrading of standards and skills of present practitioners as providing courses for training new practitioners; established practitioners generally have had little access to in-service and professional development, and improving the standard of current practitioners is seen to be vital for future registration or specialisation.

Deakin has also provided some professional development courses, and has attempted to link professional development issues to research and consultancy work through its Centre for Research and Development in Interpreting/Translating [CRDIT]. Established in 1991, this Centre has published several reports on I/T (Quynh-Du et al 1993, Athanasiadis & Turner 1994, Egan & Ozolins 1995, Pointon et al 1998) and held an international seminar on research in I/T following the FIT Congress in 1996. Significantly, while the I/T courses were closed at Deakin, CRDIT was able to continue, as it gains considerable outside funding for research and consultancies.

Chapter 7

Issues in particular domains of I/T work

One measure of the growing sophistication and maturity of the I/T field in Australia has been the number of issues that have arisen that relate I/T to other salient social or institutional issues in various aspects of Australian life, or address particular and often highly specialised needs for language services. While the previous chapters have stressed the considerable problems that still exist in adequate supply of basic services and ensuring a baseline of professionalism and accountability, in some specialised areas of I/T there has been considerable progress in addressing contemporary issues.

In some cases these areas now can be considered under threat by rationalising policies – for example, the marginalisation of mental health interpreting expertise in Victoria, as outlined in previous chapters. On the other hand, we look here at two issues – I/T in indigenous languages; and women and language services – that demonstrate a considerable amount of recent initiative and serious attempts to come to grips with often long-standing problems. A third issue – the relation between a community-oriented focus for I/T services and a focus on external and international I/T needs – will also be briefly examined.

I/T and indigenous languages

The history of poor provision and inadequate development of this area has previously been outlined, but a number of quite recent policy moves here indicate some new hope for this area, and now there are signs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island [ATSI] language needs finally being recognised and acted upon by the major players in I/T in Australia.

Aboriginal affairs took on a new face in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the replacement of the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission [ATSIC], a body with predominantly elected indigenous membership. ATSIC has been active in language policy issues, particularly relating to language education and language maintenance (NLLIA 1995), but issues of interpreting have been more difficult to come to grips with, with insufficient funding and considerable uncertainty over responsibility for services. This has resulted in, until recently, a quite serious vacuum in indigenous I/T: as we saw, training dried up in indigenous languages interpreting after 1985; moreover, there was a growing feeling through the late 1980s and early 1990s that the body responsible for what language services there were in the NT, WA and other areas of ATSI languages – TIS – was not a suitable organisation for providing services in ATSI languages, and TIS which in some locations had provided services in these languages slowly withdrew. In a 1993 Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on ATSI Affairs, a recommendation relating to Access and Equity Strategies asked ATSIC to establish a separate national interpreter service for Aboriginal languages, and that 'This will enable DIEA commence [sic] negotiations with ATSIC to transfer existing TIS responsibilities for Aboriginal languages.' (Australia. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Affairs 1993). As we shall see, ATSIC has not taken up this issue.

In other areas however there was movement, most significantly through the DSS and some other institutions dealing with indigenous populations that could not wait for policy – a good example here being Alice Springs Hospital, which from 1992 appointed five Aboriginal Liaison Officers, selected *inter alia* for the range of languages spoken. DSS has become from 1989 one of the pacesetters in providing language services, establishing an Interpreter Service in nine regional offices, with an administrative structure separate from the department's Migrant Services

Unit, and also widely using Aboriginal Liaison Officers and other personnel many of whom spoke ATSI languages. DSS saw this as essential to its role of meeting client needs (Baban 1996), and to this day remains the most significant mainstream institution clearly introducing a non-migrant emphasis in language services and of direct relevance to indigenous populations.

Awareness of language issues in indigenous affairs has most recently been heightened with two landmark legal and policy events: the High Court Mabo decision of 1992 recognising native title to land, and a pathbreaking Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody [RCIADIC] initiated in 1987 and reporting in 1991. Mabo and the consequential Native Title legislation in 1993 brought issues of Aboriginal languages into the civil sphere of the legal system, while the Royal Commission's recommendations included several related to the provision of interpreters in Police and court work, training of interpreters in indigenous languages, and cross-cultural awareness for legal professionals working with ATSI clients. These recommendations led to the development of an Indigenous Issues Unit in the Attorney-General's Department, which has been active ever since in a number of training programs and organisation of language services. A further policy stimulus was the Commonwealth Attorney-General Department's carefully prepared report on *Access to Interpreters in the Australian Legal System* (1991) which, while applying only to Commonwealth jurisdictions, spent a substantial amount of its study on problems relating to the lack of interpreters in indigenous languages.

In response to these initiatives, the 1990s have seen a number of significant developments in training and provision of services, though with often frustrating slowness and continual problems of resources, responsibility and political will-power.

- As a result of the Deaths in Custody recommendations, several courses in cultural and linguistic awareness have been held for magistrates, judges and other legal personnel in several centres.
- The Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal development commissioned a consultancy into the provision of an Aboriginal Language Interpreter Service (Carroll 1995).
- The Attorney-General's Department has helped initiate several training programs, with help from TAFE providers in South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland; Batchelor College and the Institute of Aboriginal Development [IAD]. In 1992, for example, Adelaide College of TAFE funded by the Attorney-General's Department and the SA Courts authority ran training in three regional centres in Pitjantjatjara. This was a direct outcome of *Access to Interpreters in the Australian Legal System.* In 1992 the NAATI Board asked the WA Regional Advisory Committee to look at ATSI needs, and in subsequent years Central Metropolitan College of TAFE ran two pilot programs at Fitzroy Crossing, Derby and Halls Creek covering Kriol, Walmajarri, Jaru, Kukatja and Kitja, while in Queensland Southbank TAFE ran training in Torres Strait Creole. A-G's intensified its support in 1995-1997, supporting a number of courses through Batchelor, IAD and elsewhere, with over 50 accreditations resulting in more than a dozen languages.
- A further impetus in this field was given by the Commonwealth Government's *Access to Justice* strategy in 1994, detailing a wide range of access issues, not language services alone, that affected particular groups in Australian society. This led to the continuation of the impetus of many of the programs mentioned above, and introduced some completely new initiatives, such as the eventual trial of an Aboriginal Language Interpreter Service in the Northern Territory for six months in 1997. Unfortunately, subsequent funding cuts have led to the end of these programs.
- NAATI responded to the issue by working not only through its Regional Advisory Committees [RACs], but also directly by taking national leadership in developing a significant discussion paper *A National Training Strategy for I/T in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages* (NAATI 1995). This paper built on the revitalised training efforts of the early 1990s, and promoted not only further I/T training, but also increased training for professionals working with ATSI language speakers, and addressed issues of the lack of employment for ATSI interpreters and the need to provide stable and specialised language services. It argued for a diversity of courses and approaches to I/T pedagogy, with not only accredited paraprofessional courses but also shorter courses and modules to meet particular needs, and suggested modifications to the National Diploma of Interpreting to make it relevant to ATSI languages. In the longer term it was hoped to eventually provide professional-level accreditation in ATSI languages.

This increased level of activity and interest resulted eventually in the first major forum on I/T in indigenous languages in Australia, *Proper True Talk*, sponsored by the Attorney-General's Department and NAATI, in Alice

Springs in October 1995. The Report of this forum (Australia. Attorney-General's Department & NAATI 1996) presents views from all the major institutions and players in relation to I/T in ATSI languages, and gives an excellent overview of both recent developments in this field and the considerable problems that still remain. While focusing heavily on legal issues, other areas of need such as health interpreting, DSS and other areas were also covered.

The forum gives sharp insight into the massive problems faced in establishing language services in indigenous languages, and the broader socio-cultural environment that worked against effective communication. Speaker after speaker commented on the abiding reluctance to use interpreters, difficulties in provision and training, lack of coordination and the enormous cultural differences that still overwhelmingly determined practices. In opening the forum, Attorney-General representative Kym Duggan reflected on his own previous period of practice as a lawyer:

> Again and again in the Katherine Magistrates Court in the early 1980s I watched as sometimes as many as 20 new clients for the local Aboriginal Legal Service would turn up at the court on one day. The problems of communication between solicitor and client were often extreme even with the best will in the world. These matters were often all dealt with that day. I know from talking to a number of the lawyers involved with the legal service that they always retained a nagging doubt as to whether the time and communication problems meant that Aboriginal accused did not get the same treatment as Europeans. (Ibid: 6)

To underline how little had changed, former AID trainer Russell Goldflam described the Alice Springs situation in the mid 1990s, pointing out that there was still not acceptance of the principle that Aborigines who did not understand English should have the services of an interpreter. He pointed to the police being major culprits here, at the point where Aborigines first came into contact with the legal system, but also pointed out that Legal Aid services, the Crown Prosecutor and the courts themselves rarely used interpreters, for a variety of reasons and rationalisations. This led to this typical situation:

> When it comes to that famous command 'Silence in court!', so far as Aboriginal people are concerned, it is to be taken very literally indeed. Anyone who has ever spent a morning in the Alice Springs Court of Summary Jurisdiction will readily understand why so many people, including Magistrates and lawyers, refer to it as the 'sausage machine'. Aboriginal defendants are processed through the grind of court as passive, mute, silent objects. The prosecutor reads out the charge. The Legal Aid solicitor makes a speech about the defendant's good character. The Magistrate delivers a ritual sermon. Whether the defendant has the faintest understanding of any of this is simply not considered. But as the defendant is not required to say anything, except the magic word 'guilty', this doesn't inconvenience the due process of law, and it's on to the next case... It's part of the deeply ingrained culture of legal discourse, and its power should not be underestimated. (Ibid: 123)

Such perspectives also put in place the limits of providing interpreters without changing aspects of this legal culture. While the NAATI discussion paper had argued that the provision of interpreters would 'eliminate many of the difficulties experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in dealing with officialdom' (NAATI 1995: 5), Goldflam argues this view is misguided: while certainly interpreters must be provided, and Goldflam gives many suggestions of how provisions in law could lead to insistence upon interpreters, this would not change many of the more insidious aspects of current legal practice:

> We must be careful not to project the dangerous myth that interpreting can resolve deep-seated problems caused by ingrained features of Australian society, such as institutionalised racism and structural inequality. (Australia. Attorney-General's Department and NAATI 1996: 123)

Points made by Goldflam and others have become the basis of a now mature body of Australian work related to Aboriginal discourse analysis and forensic linguistics, represented in particular by the work of Eades (1992, 1995), Gibbons (1994) and Cooke (1995, 1996).

Eades, one of the participants at the Alice Springs forum, points to substantial problems of misunderstanding Aboriginal discourse on the part of almost all participants in legal process, misunderstanding in particular such issues as silence, eye contact and gratuitous concurrence. She used examples of witnesses or defendants using (often very light) Aboriginal English and the dramatic contrast between their communicative style and the 'one-sided interview' that characterises typical legal discourse. Eades points to recent cases where lawyers or judges were beginning to recognise these issues, but there is still a long way for the legal system to go in understanding discourse of users of Aboriginal English, let alone those not speaking English.

Along with such authors as Laster and Taylor (1994), this work places considerations of interpreting within its wider legal and communicative context. While provision of interpreters would certainly not solve most of these problems, it seems the insistence upon interpreters would be of enormous assistance precisely in making more transparent these legal processes that often work against ATSI people in their contact with the law.

Finally, moving back to interpreting issues *per se,* the Alice Springs forum gave a very good insight into the everyday logistic and organisational problems of providing language services in indigenous languages. A student workshop pointed to the difficulties faced by graduates of courses: along with the more familiar issues of lack of understanding of role on the part of users and lack of resources, came specific concerns: provision of transport or telephones in a situation where few interpreters have vehicles or telephones; immediacy of payment; providing community-based rather than centralised or bureaucratic services; providing sufficient English and maths in training. The workshops also were reluctant to set priorities for the larger languages of use. Clearly these elements, which are less common in relation to I/T in migrant languages, point to distinctive elements in provision of I/T in indigenous languages. It will be some considerable while before there can be common professional concerns between interpreters in migrant and in indigenous languages, though links are slowly being forged between these two fields.

Women and language services

This area has been the area of three substantial reports on I/T services (Jupp & McRobbie 1992, Pardy 1995, Candlin & Plimer 1996). These have come in the context of much broader moves to identify aspects of immigration and settlement affecting migrant women and in particular NESB migrant women.

Jupp and McRobbie's report in 1992 was conducted under the auspices of the Council of Non-English Speaking Women, a joint Commonwealth and State government advisory group. A major reason for having such a report was the often arising claim that migrant women were in fact the major users of I/T services, and Jupp and McRobbie sought to first of all quantify and describe this phenomenon, and secondly to report on implications for language services of this responsibility. Yet even elementary points in relation to these kinds of claims proved infuriatingly difficult to quantify or identify. First, very few language services kept any statistics at all relating to gender (indeed a good statistical base has been a much broader problem for language services, not only related to gender issues). It was not possible in most cases to identify user by gender. Further, awareness of this as an issue for language services had only arisen in one context, whether a client could demand a female interpreter on request, and related to this, whether institutions requesting interpreters were able to identify this as an issue for their service. The report detailed particular cases where a female interpreter may be considered more appropriate by a client, but again in surveying authorities and language services there was no consistency of either viewpoint or practice on this issue. A few language services did ask about gender-specific interpreters when responding to a request to provide service, but there were usually no systematic records kept of this, and in many cases female clients were not aware of their right to request a female interpreter. User institutions (hospitals, lawyers, health centres, other government offices) had no consistent policy on this issue.

Overall, I/T practitioners were overwhelmingly female at least in the major languages, but the report identified several languages, particularly Arabic, Turkish and Vietnamese, where the proportion of female interpreters was much lower. The report recommended the principle of gender-specific provision as a right should be accepted by language services and user institutions; that services maintain adequate records related to gender, and that particular attention be given to Arabic, Turkish and Vietnamese (eg in relation to recruitment to courses). The ultimate report seemed to suffer heavily from State/Commonwealth divergences of opinion at several points, an oft encountered consequence of federalism in Australia, which led to some recommendations being quite guarded and limited in the final report.

Pardy's (1995) report was a closer to the ground study of the experiences of a sample of NESB women with interpreters, pointing to a range of shortcomings in present provision felt by these clients, and giving what has rarely been encountered in any report on I/T in Australia – actual responses from the NESB users. While representative bodies (eg Ethnic Communities Councils) from time to time have commented on I/T services or otherwise involved themselves in policy discussion, Pardy recorded personal experiences, showing the considerable misgivings that many clients had in relation to interpreters' understanding and sensitivity towards their needs. Pardy's study is interesting on many counts, perhaps most of all in showing the gap that exists between interpreters and the interpreting profession's view of its role on the one hand, and the view of the interpreter's role as expounded by NESB female clients and their advocates on the other. The study included reports of discussions held with a group of interpreters, where interpreters (female) expressed their sympathy for NESB female clients, but pointed to their own overall lack of preparation and training to handle many situations that female clients were most sensitive to, and also interpreters' individual powerlessness to influence the other users of language services or language services themselves to respond to these issues.

The report was not an attempt at overall survey, concentrating on a relatively small number of female NESB clients and interpreters. It is difficult from the report to determine also the background of the interpreters used – even elementary questions of whether the interpreters were accredited or not, or had received I/T training were not addressed, nor were these factors identified in client responses and experiences. The strong impression from the report however, was that interpreters of whatever other significant background factors in terms of professional preparedness or accreditation, had relatively little explicit preparation on women's issues and little explicit regard for them, even where the bulk of their interpreting work was with NESB women. I/T courses only address women's issues *en passant*, for example in looking at health issues or family issues or industrial issues as part of contextual studies or other similar parts of courses, and many practice situations or texts will relate to women's issues, but consciously focusing on women and interpreting is rarely done. Likewise, there is no explicit recognition of women's issues in any of the standard monitoring procedures of language services.

Plimer and Candlin's (1996) report looked at NESB women's needs both in ESL provision and in I/T. In relation to I/T, this report could now identify a considerable growth in awareness of gender issues among language services, at least at the level of responding to requests to provide female interpreters. Virtually all major language services now did this as a matter of routine, in some cases in a proactive way by always booking a female interpreter for certain categories of use (gynaecological, family law) if a female client was involved, whether requested or not. However, quantification of the extent of female use and of interpreters and patterns of provision relating to gender was still sketchy, with only a few language services incorporating these issues completely into their information collecting procedures. The new information system for TIS will allow better record keeping on gender for this major agency.

Plimer and Candlin's study is significant on two further counts. First, the connection with ESL issues identified by the authors is a very welcome new move in thinking about language services. At a policy level, the two fields have developed little relation between them, even though both are crucial in settlement services. At the individual level, Plimer and Candlin found many women were familiar neither with ESL opportunities nor with the availability of interpreters. Secondly, while concentrating on gender issues, Plimer and Candlin range much more widely over I/T in Australia, giving perhaps apart from Martin, the best overview of historical developments in I/T in Australia, and usefully relating gender issues to a whole host of other issues for language services.

The attention given to gender issues has been a somewhat uncomfortable issue for language services to respond to, and indeed one can sense a certain frustration on the part of language services or trainers or the I/T profession in the face of this issue. On the one hand, NESB women as a client group are clearly recognised by practitioners, and many practitioners would spend an overwhelming amount of their time with them; further, having this client group has served to heighten awareness of other professional issues – such as the absolute stricture of confidentiality, understanding of cultural norms and in some cases taboos, and the dangers of using children or friends or non-professional interpreters. At the same time, interpreters and trainers and language services are probably a little defensive on this issue, and from several instances mentioned in the reports have to be dragged to recognise its wider ramifications. This is not only due to perhaps reaction to what is seen as a feminist issue, but also profound basic attitudes towards their work and profession are in fact confronted here. In some comments on an earlier draft of the Candlin & Plimer report, this present author pointed to the seemingly unbridgeable gap that had developed between those in I/T, and those promoting issues of NESB women as a priority for I/T:

> I have witnessed more than one meeting between those involved in I/T in various ways and groups promoting access for NESB women, and on this point the two sides constantly talk past one another. Professional interpreters always see themselves as having *two* clients. They see themselves as providing the means for NESB clients to access services, but equally as providing the means for organisations and professionals to service whichever client, regardless of language barriers. A decade or two ago, it could well have been argued that the majority of 'clients' of interpreters were male Aussie bureaucrats and professionals; with the feminisation of bureaucracies and professions it may be correct to say the majority of clients now are females – both ESB and

> NESB. This is not mere word-play. Demands that language services should see NESB women as their primary client thus collide with professional perspectives, not for any lack of sympathy or empathy but as a different professional perspective. Moreover, for reasons discussed further below, it is often the English-speaking client who is directly or indirectly paying for the interpreter, and to whom the interpreter is in a position of accountability at least as much as to the NESB client, male or female.
>
> It is an understandable perspective to say that I/T services are for NESB clients; in fact if they are to develop, to not remain marginalised and to be seen as essential to a society, the more useful perspective would be that I/T services exist to ensure service provision by mainstream institutions and professionals. (Plimer and Candlin 1996: 83)

A lot of this debate from an NESB women's advocate perspective stresses one salient point: the right to have a female interpreter. One useful way of handling this may indeed start to see gender-specific provision in a wider context, for example, if an institution guarantees gender-specific provision of other personnel (eg for doctors, duty lawyers, police etc), then it would seem that a specific request for a gender-specific interpreter would be entirely appropriate. More broadly still, however, we also do see in these other areas of work (eg in medicine, in legal or police work) the way this issue has been handled there: in a professional sense, each of these professions and their salient institutions are indeed 'gender-neutral'. That is, any policeman has to be able to handle issues that come up whether in relation to male or female accused or victims or other parties involved in police matters. Likewise, any doctor must be able to treat both male and female patients (indeed in the public hospital system, patients do not have a choice of doctor, and must agree to treatment by any doctor allocated). Yet in an operational sense, both police and medical institutions have moved to become much more sensitive to gender issues, for example with male police handing over rape cases in almost all cases to female officers etc, or hospitals trying to provide female doctors or other staff on request. This suggests one way forward for I/T in Australia on this issue:

> This alternative perspective may then provide some guidelines for use of, *inter alia*, female interpreters: where other professions/organisations provide gender-specific services or provide that option, a gender-specific interpreter provision would seem quite appropriate. (Plimer and Candlin 1996: 83)

The question could be raised as to whether there are cases where it may be more important to provide a female *interpreter* than perhaps necessarily a female in another professional role: because, for example, a male interpreter from a particular culture may themselves have dispositions that could constrain or in some way negatively affect a female needing the interpreter, whereas a male in another professional role may not present this difficulty. Scattered comments from NESB women throughout the reports hint at something like this view in some cases, but it remains shadowy and deserves further investigation.

However, providing female interpreters is only half of the story. As all three reports mentioned here pointed out, when discussing these issues with interpreters, even female interpreters, concerns were often expressed about ability to understand and respond to various issues related to gender, and the lack of focus on this as an issue in particular institutional contexts. One useful additional report here, not concentrating on language services *per se* but placing these in a wider context of NESB women's needs, is the Immigrant Women's Health Project from the Mercy Hospital in Melbourne (Lopez and Fazzallori 1995). This report details changes in the hospital over several years to identify NESB women's issues and have consciousness of these issues pervade all aspects of the hospital including language services.

The project consisted of a hospital-based study, surveying staff at various levels within the hospital study to get their responses to issues in treating NESB groups, and a community-based study. The latter drew on responses to hospital practices gathered in focused interviews with women patients in several NESB groups – Chilean and Salvadorean, Russian and Ukrainian, Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, and Lebanese Muslims. Considerable deficiencies in relating to NESB patients were found in many functional areas of the hospital, and the report recommended wide-ranging changes to hospital procedures in both administrative and clinical areas.

Patients and hospital staff were generally positive about the language services provided by the hospital interpreters, but were less happy about services provided by on-call interpreters who were not hospital-based. The report is particularly critical of training of health interpreters, arguing that the area of women's health raises particular issues for interpreters they must be sensitised to and have substantial training in. General Interpreting accreditation does not guarantee any familiarity at all with this area, and generalist interpreting services are unable to train their practitioners to adequately meet these needs. Most fundamentally, from the point of view of this report, the Interpreting profession defines itself in generalist ways that overlook specific issues of migrant women's health.

Interpreting, domestic violence and sexual assault

A significant policy response to this range of NESB women's issues has come directly from the NSW EAC which has identified domestic violence and sexual assault as one of its areas of priority as a language service. After detailed discussions on this issue with various client and institutional groups the EAC has introduced a 24-hour service to respond to such, publicised the availability of EAC interpreters, and given a large number of female interpreters on its panel training on the handling of domestic violence and sexual assault cases (NSW EAC 1995b). This is the first instance of a mainstream service identifying such an area for priority, and devoting considerable resources to it: the EAC has produced training packages for both interpreters and other professionals, including videos and booklets on the issues, and has publicised its service widely among agencies confronted by these cases.

In other States and language services there have been less specific formal responses to issues of domestic violence and sexual assault, but this remains a significant area of work for interpreters in police or welfare settings. The number of reports and other publicity of various kinds on these issues have led to changes to police and welfare agency protocols for handling such cases, which in turn affect the way interpreters work. Currently training courses or in-service on this issue in places outside NSW are also starting to be seen, with for example TIS in Melbourne running workshops on 'Women and Interpreting'. It is a likely area of greater focus in the future as gender issues become more salient and specifically identified for increasing numbers of major language services.

Australia and International needs in I/T

There are no organised language services which cater specifically to external and international needs in I/T. Established language services have a brief to cater for internal communication needs within Australia or a particular State, but even here international issues have occasionally surfaced: the links TIS has with Language Line in the UK is one example, VITS' recent development of its conference interpreting capacity is another, SAMEAC's work with overseas delegations visiting South Australia another.

For the most part, however, international services are provided by

- private sector providers
- in-house expertise
- interpreters brought by delegations/conferences from elsewhere.

In the private area, data on numbers and provision is not simply difficult to get, but the field is so atomised and so lacking in cohesion and professional infrastructure that indeed any attempt to ask question to quantify tends to be seen as a seeking after commercial secrets. Thus, anecdote and partial information replace any more global understanding.

There are few private companies that survive exclusively from international I/T work, though a number of individual practitioners do so in a wide range of languages, working through established contacts and networks. Of larger companies, Sydney Tour Hosts is the dominant player in Sydney and interstate, while On-Call in Melbourne has built up a significant conference interpreting capacity in the last half decade. In both cases, the companies have other work – Tour Hosts in conference organisation and tourism, On-Call in community-related I/T work. A number of smaller companies practise in specific markets eg for Japanese-Australia contacts in NSW or Queensland, but may be only rarely directly involved in providing I/T.

All companies organising conferences or delegation work rely upon relatively small numbers of practitioners. A small group of AIIC interpreters exists in Australia, mainly in European languages but now also in Chinese and Japanese, but in many cases other practitioners must be used, who possess varying levels of skill or training. Currently only Queensland University trains conference-level interpreters (in Japanese only), but recently both UWS and Deakin have also held shorter courses in conference interpreting, attesting to the growth of this field and new opportunities arising as increasing numbers of conferences requiring interpreting are held in Australia.

In translation, the scene is more varied, particularly with technological innovations making it possible to do translations virtually anywhere in the world, meaning local agencies can recruit overseas translators to work on

Australian texts, just as Australian translators can then compete for overseas work. A small number of Australian agencies use such international connections, sometimes taking advantage of time differences to deliver rapid work. In the case of large pieces of work, it is now possible for translations to be offered in one country, done in a second country, printed in a third country to be distributed to clients in other countries.

The most common way for companies or government department to meet their language needs however has been either to use in-house staff, or to rely upon language services being provided by the other side. While this takes us even further into the realm of anecdote and partial information, some comments can be made.

First, while many small companies in Australia that deal with international clients are run themselves by immigrants to Australia with language skills and knowledge of other countries relevant to the tasks, this does not obtain for many of Australia's larger or medium companies, who may be grappling with issues of export and related issues of foreign languages and cultures perhaps for the first time. For example, a number of well-established Vietnamese translators in Australia all have their 'BHP story', when Australia's largest company Broken Hill Proprietary was interested in establishing itself in Vietnam and sought language services assistance of various kinds. A range of practices seemed to be run by different parts of the company, seemingly unrelated to one another. In some cases translations were welcomed and valued. In others translations were promised but never arrived; in other cases huge translations arrived and were expected to be translated by return post. Practitioners who called in to receive translations often found that other tasks were requested, such as secretarial work. Questions of who did translations inside the company were answered, if at all, by reference to bilingual secretarial staff. Clearly, the culture of many Australian companies does not include any clear appreciation of language services, their potential or limits.

Second, it should be noted that many Australian companies have only in the last decade or so oriented themselves towards export and needing to deal with clients speaking other languages. While there have been some excellent reports in this area in the early 1990s, and attempts to inform companies of language needs and resources (Valverde 1990, Stanley et al 1990, NLLIA 1991, Australian Language and Literacy Council 1994), awareness of these issues within companies wanting to trade remains patchy at best. The 1990 conference 'Language is Good Business' (NLLIA 1991) did bring to the fore some exemplary companies whose management was keen to make use of language resources and had themselves invested considerably in being linguistically prepared for their activities, but such practices are clearly limited. Indeed, if a few decades ago institutions such as hospitals or welfare agencies or schools or police needed to go through a learning curve of recognising their I/T needs, not relying upon any bilingual to do the job, and finally recognising and valuing professional interpreting services, then many Australian companies need to go precisely through the same learning curve now.

Many companies or government departments rely upon the other party's interpreters. Surprisingly, this attitude goes right to the top even with some government delegations dealing with the most important international contacts. In the 1991 version of this report, an AIIC interpreter in Australia was quoted as relating the following incident:

> My colleague and I were engaged to interpret for a meeting between the Australian Prime Minister and a senior French statesman. It was a meeting around a table of the two delegations, and we proceeded in the normal way, working both sides of the table in 30 minute blocks or so, in turn interpreting and then helping out our colleague who took over. Things went smoothly. As we proceeded, however, I noticed a young lady who sat right next to the Prime Minister, and who kept looking at us the whole way through the proceedings. I thought she must be a very important adviser indeed to the Prime Minister, because all through the meeting she did not make any contribution at all to the discussion. At a break in the meeting, I was surprised when she spoke to us: she expressed admiration for what we had been doing, and it transpired why she was at the meeting, and why she had been watching us so intently. It turned out that she was an officer in Foreign Affairs, and the previous day at 4pm a call had come through to her section, asking her to come to the meeting as the Prime Minister's interpreter: she had been stationed in France, and she spoke some French. As she explained to us: 'I can order in a restaurant, and ask my way, but I can't do what you're doing!' She was more than happy to leave the interpreting to us. We had been engaged by the French side. (Ozolins 1991:98)

This incident, recounted at the CITEAA Conference in Canberra in October 1989, illustrates the extent to which uncertainty over I/T in Australia is not confined to the areas of migrant and community concerns, but seems to be very evident in all of Australia's dealings with other languages and cultures. Yet it is clear such practices were not just those of a decade ago: this is a practice that was noted and commented on by many interviewed for this study, who had had recent dealings with foreign delegations. Many of the attitudes of three decades ago described by Kerr (1988) continue to be found. Indeed, considering the continuous raising of consciousness of these issues among many of the community-oriented professions in Australia, it is now clearly the areas of external affairs, trade and international business that demonstrate critical shortcomings in understanding language issues.

For the Foreign Affairs officials concerned with the international meeting described above, the need to have anyone there with any language capacity at all was a last-minute decision, and overall a low priority. The AIIC interpreters in Australia report that they are rarely if ever engaged by the Australian side in such situations, but almost always by the other side, who are much clearer in their understanding of interpreting and of the quality of interpreting expected. Also, from the Australian side there is little understanding of the other benefits that can come to a delegation from having one's own interpreter. For such an incident still to happen recently is also an ironic commentary on Foreign Affairs' considerable efforts particularly over the last two decades to raise the language capacity of its own service: such efforts will not be complete until they have percolated to the politicians, ministers and heads of departments.

For the interpreting profession, however, despite the difficulties of the international-oriented market, there has been considerable development at the higher echelons. AIIC interpreters are now active in Australia not only in the increasing numbers of international conferences and business meetings, but have also become active in the wider interpreting field, as practitioners in local settings (particularly in the legal area) and also in advisory capacities, both to NAATI and the emerging profession in Australia. As interpreters coming out of the community-oriented background in Australia increasingly work across the spectrum of interpreting settings, there is potential for the profession to develop a top that will act as a real incentive for good practitioners to stay in the field and develop their skills for all the available markets.

However, at the moment there is considerable mismatch between the potential for interpreting in Australia and its active utilisation by those with seemingly most to gain from effective international communication, and attitudes towards interpreting on the part of external-oriented organisations need to be reformed at the very highest levels. In terms of public education on I/T issues, these should be as much directed towards internationally-oriented situations as the more common Australian internal situations. The current situation is also a salutary reminder that the position of I/T and the I/T profession in Australia is not only a reflection of attitudes towards migrants and consequent low status of the practitioners; far more fundamental orientations of Australian political and business institutions towards other cultures are revealed, with worrying consequences not only for the I/T profession.

There have been few occasions when I/T issues in Australia have gained any international coverage, the most notable perhaps being the War Crimes Trial of Ivan Polyukhovich in Adelaide in the early 1990s under Australia's War Crimes legislation. Polyukhovich was accused of mass executions and murders in the Ukraine during World War II, charged in 1990, and had a committal hearing and Supreme Court trial before being acquitted in 1993. Interpreting and translating issues became central to the case. The investigators were meticulous in their checking of translations and evidence obtained from the field in the Ukraine and elsewhere (Australia. Attorney-General's Department 1993), but problems arose when a number of witnesses were brought to Australia and gave evidence at both committal proceedings and trial. On several occasions interpreting problems particularly in Hebrew and Ukrainian were highlighted; experts in these languages reviewed the evidence and transcripts and pointed to various inconsistencies, and it is significant that it was precisely interpreting that was the weak link in the chain of evidence. Trial Judge Cox in reviewing the committal hearing problems in this regard 'said that he marvelled how much had been spent in preparing and presenting the case and yet, at the practical stage of taking evidence, the interpreting was obviously deficient' (Bevan 1994:193; see also Favretto 1996). Finally, Myriam Schlesinger was brought to Australia from Israel to interpret at the Supreme Court trial because of persisting problems particularly with Hebrew interpreting. Accounts of the Supreme Court trial generally did not mention problems with interpreting.

It is, of course, standard for issues of interpreting only to be highlighted if there are complaints about the interpreting; good interpreting usually will pass unremarked. The Polyukhovich case no doubt unfairly characterised Australian interpreters – Hebrew, for example, is not one of the languages accredited at the Professional level by NAATI. Yet awareness of how poor interpreting may affect many aspects of Australia's relations with others is only slowly developing.

SECTION 3

Interpreting/Translating globally

Chapter 8

International perspectives

This report cannot hope to comprehensively cover all developments in I/T around the world that relate to multilingual populations, and does not make any claims to covering this field, whose growth is now so marked that any specific current information may well be out of date at the next browsing of the Internet! Nevertheless, it is possible to outline some important features of the development of language services in various countries, showing in some ways a unified move to address issues of need and provision, and in other ways a considerable divergence of understandings and practices. Needless to say, serious comparative studies in this area are virtually nonexistent, while even detailed studies of developments in one country or one language service are rare. This whole field is in a pre-theoretical stage, but the following is based on what printed material is available (usually reports or descriptions of language services used by that service for their publicity or accountability) plus what has been gleaned from a large number of individual contacts. Such occasions as the first International Congress on Interpreting in Health, Welfare and Community settings in Geneva Park, Canada in 1995 (Carr et al 1997), and growing communication between personnel in different language services, educational institutions and decision-making bodies now gives us the basis to share common problems and be more aware of the details of diversity. The following information is dependent on what this author has been able to derive from personal contacts andcorrespondence as well as what is available in standard literature (which is still relatively small). If the brief survey here can give a rudimentary outline of relative developments, and perhaps encourage practitioners and researchers in various countries to write more about the situation in their country, or do comparative studies, its aim will have been achieved.

In Chapter 1 of this report it was argued that a spectrum exists of responses to I/T needs in multilingual settings from a situation of no provision, through ad hoc services, to generic language services to comprehensiveness. Some countries had also had what was termed a legalistic or constitution-rights driven response. In a situation which must be viewed positively as one of the growth of language services in many countries, it is not possible nor necessary to categorically place each country's achievements on a definite point along this line, and a country's putative position may change very swiftly with but a few innovations! However, we will still see a very marked spread of provision, and the spectrum is a useful touchstone.

In terms of the history already outlined of the slow and often reluctant recognition of language issues in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, one can find virtually the same responses documented by those seeking to establish language services in many parts of Europe, North America, Asia or elsewhere in the various decades since World War II. In a large number of instances from vastly different countries, interpreting and translating for internal needs has struggled to gain recognition, and it is precisely this struggle that is perhaps the first unifying point of those concerned with language services today, and gives services in often vastly different countries a remarkably common history of struggle for recognition.

Beyond this, however, there have been significant differences in how language services have been conceptualised and developed. While in general one can draw a parallel between a welcoming immigration /indigenous peoples' orientation and development of I/T services, such a one-dimensional relationship does not do justice to the great variety of specific institutional responses that we notice, or the considerable variety in issues such as understanding of the role of interpreters, salience of the profession, spread or depth of provision, and institutional integration. This variety of institutional response can be analysed along several crucial variables:

- definition of the place of the immigrant (or indigenous group) in the society
- defining the place of the interpreter in relation to these populations (and to the extent that this is defined, not as a professional but as a 'helper' or assistant specifically for the immigrant not speaking the dominant language)
- defining the role of various public (and private) institutions vis-à-vis these populations
- defining the place of the interpreter *vis-à-vis* the institutions intended to service these populations
- defining the institutional, legal and conventional context of the, interpreter's work, preparation and management (particularly in the 'legalistic' stage)
- the interpreters' collective self-definition of their role, limits and functions, including relations with other interpreters

To pursue this analysis we take some brief case studies of various countries for our comparative perspective with Australia. We begin with some of the other major English-speaking countries, and countries of historic immigration, then look at a variety of other, traditionally non-immigration countries around the world that are now attending to language services.

United Kingdom

I/T services for local populations were scarcely defined as an issue until the late 1970s or even early 1980s, as the increase in NESB Commonwealth and other immigrants began to seriously affect British institutions, particularly the school system and health system. Shackman's path-breaking 1984 study *The Right to be Understood* still stands as an exemplary analysis of a situation where there was no organised national or regional approach to I/T, where awareness of I/T issues was restricted to local health, education and welfare practitioners, and where NESB groups were generally withdrawn and reluctant to press any claim for language services. Interpreters in these situations were almost invariably in the beginning volunteers, or in a few cases local authority employees with other duties who began to be called on to interpret. In a few cases practitioners were specifically appointed for their language skills, usually performing wider functions of liaison and bilingual aide work. In these circumstances, the role of the interpreter was clearly one of 'helper' in a situation of no organised response to need; inevitably, the helper was a member of the target group with better English than the others, but with no other assessed abilities or qualifications. The institutional definition of these helpers was essentially residualist – as someone who could be called on when communication was deemed not to be occurring with a member of the target population.

Shackman's study was important in arguing for the need for training and preparation on the part of interpreters, but Shackman proposed this mindful that Britain was starting from ground zero, where no training provision was made by educational institutions. She proposed short training courses to familiarise interpreters with the institutions they were to deal with, and build up their interpreting skills, confidence, and facility in English, particularly in bureaucratic jargon demanded in certain situations. She was aware of the limitation of this approach, but saw this was all that was possible in a situation where only a few local authorities were at all aware of needs. Translation services of a very limited kind were provided by a few private companies or individuals, with no quality control, but translation fell largely outside Shackman's brief.

Meanwhile in Britain, interpreters and translators in major European languages were prepared in a small number of I/T courses in polytechnics and universities. These courses did not generally relate to other languages needed for internal needs (eg Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, later Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic).

Shackman's work had come as part of the moves in the early 1980s to address unmet I/T needs from two significant institutions – the Nuffield Foundation and the Institute of Linguists. Nuffield provided foundation money from 1983 for initial issue identification, training and support of language services in an often uncomprehending and uncaring institutional environment. Importantly, the Nuffield work linked up with an institution central to language professionals and language services – the Institute of Linguists. This body had long acted as the *de facto* accreditation agency for language professionals in Great Britain (including interpreters and translators), and now began to look at testing and training needs in the light of newer needs for language services. Through its Community Interpreter Project from 1980, training needs were addressed through the development of a Bilingual Skills Certificate and then a Certificate in Community Interpreting, with very importantly a course to train the trainers at the Polytechnic of Central London (now Westminster University). The Institute of Linguists broadened the range of languages it set for its examinations, extending beyond traditional European and world languages into many of the languages used internally in Britain, and was able to test relatively small groups of candidates – a vital element in responding to increasingly diverse language needs.

In 1990 The Nuffield Foundation launched its Interpreter Project to assist in developing an infrastructure for language services, concentrating on training, and on raising general awareness of language needs. Perhaps most crucially, the field was defined in a particular way that gave it institutional salience. The definition chosen was 'Public Service Interpreting', attempting to encompass under this title all interpreting for public authorities, and providing theoretically a very forceful definition that allowed this kind of interpreting to be acknowledged by public service authorities and be seen as part of their brief.

A consequential issue was awareness raising and training of the institutions making use of public sector interpreters. This was seen to be necessary if previous ignorant or even antagonistic attitudes towards interpreters and NESB clients were to be broken down. In Britain, interestingly, training of institutions to understand and work with interpreters came hand in hand with training of interpreters themselves, and if anything training for interpreters to a full academic or professional level has still continued to lag behind. Yet the institutional awareness was crucial to ensure visibility of services, and to entrench a commitment by institutions to actually use language services. The work of Anne Corsellis is significant here from 1980, working on early training courses and raising public awareness of issues, later as the principal consultant to the Nuffield Interpreter Project, producing several handbooks for training institutions and other institutions working with interpreters (Corsellis 1988, 1995; Adams, Corsellis & Harmer 1995) and ceaselessly promoting the importance of language services to a civil service that is now beginning to listen.

Corsellis and others particularly worked to upgrade the certificate training course to the Diploma of Public Service Interpreting, which is now taught in several Colleges throughout Britain, and goes some way towards placing training of Public Service Interpreters closer to that provided in I/T for European languages in full academic and professional courses at British universities.

British developments in I/T at this time were also influenced by some important policy developments, particularly related to interpreting in the legal context, which served to highlight language needs. Two legal cases in particular attracted considerable public attention: the first was the *Begum* case where a Pakistani woman who served three years of a life sentence for murder was freed by the Court of Appeal in 1985 as it transpired the interpreter at her trial was an Urdu interpreter (a language the accused understood poorly) and not a Punjabi interpreter, Begum's own language. In the second, the 1993 *Kunnath* case from Mauritius, heard on appeal in Britain, an accused drug-smuggler won an appeal on the grounds that interpreting had not been provided for most of the police and court proceedings, and what had been provided was in a language the accused knew only poorly. In 1993, the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice (the Runciman Report) paid considerable attention to shortcomings in interpreting in legal process, particularly in terms of qualifications and standards of interpreters, strongly supporting a centralised register of qualified interpreters, and doing much to propel the eventual Register of Public Service Interpreters

In 1994 the Institute of Linguists with the help of funding from the Home Office established a National Register of Public Service Interpreters [RPSI]. This approach to language service provision is an alternative and adjunct to other forms of organisation where specific language services have been established and maintained in the public sector to attend to various fields of interpreting. The register lists accredited interpreters, who will be either those who gain the Diploma of PSI, or those accredited by test by the Institute of Linguists, and this register will be available to all public sector organisations; contact will be directly between each institution and the individual interpreter, rather than contact through a language service organisation. Interestingly, this is not a generalist interpreting accreditation: to make accreditation specifically useful to particular areas of public sector work, candidates are assessed in one (or more) of four distinct areas: Law; Scottish Law; Health and Local Government (Ostarhild 1996).

With this system only recently introduced, it is probably still too early to evaluate its potential. By 1996 only a small number of practitioners were registered with it, many in European languages and the number with other languages is still relatively small. However, with envisaged expansion this framework will provide a single focus for institutions wishing to contact interpreters. Of course, such a proposal assumes knowledge on the part of users of when and where an interpreter is required, and that adequate numbers of interpreters in relevant places will be available; shortcomings in either area will result in a return to ad hoc measures on the part of public sector institutions.

At the same time as the register has come into being, public sector authorities have also been responding in a variety of other ways, with many local government bodies now employing interpreters and translators (Rait 1993). Here the picture of provision is far more diverse in terms of overall unifying approaches, with significant differences emerging among local attempts to establish services, and some crucial definitional issues. With no national language service, differences in local government areas or issues faced by heath or welfare systems are well reflected in the variety of language service orientations. A useful oversight here is provided in a publication from the London Interpreting Project, a Project supported by the Benefits Agency of the Department of Social Security, and financed by the London Borough Grants Committee (Sanders nd). While not dated, the publication seems to be of 1994 or 1995 vintage. It is intended as largely a guide for local government or health/welfare agencies to set up language services, and covers quite basic ground of identifying need, establishing working protocols etc. Most interestingly, it provides a description of three distinct models of interpreter role and the relation between interpreting and other roles that currently form the basis of practice in several London language services.

Sanders in 'A Word on Terminology' at the beginning of the publication gives us this definition:

> *Community interpreter/interpreter* – these terms are used interchangeably to refer to anyone who formally facilitates communication between a service provider and a service user whose first language is not English. For the sake of brevity, and because we believe that the term community interpreter automatically implies an element of advocacy and a commitment to the interpreter's community, we have frequently used this term to encompass advocates and linkworkers.

This clearly shows the London interpreting scene is characterised by very strong views of what are legitimate roles for interpreters. In the body of the work there is explicit recognition of not just one prevailing view but in fact three distinct models of interpreter role and orientation, and the discussion here links up with similar discussions elsewhere in the world over cultural interpreting or language mediation. Sanders identifies these three models of language services in London:

- the 'linguistic' model, stressing impartiality, interpreting in the first person, non-intervention on the part of the interpreter except where there has been misunderstanding etc. This is the model adopted by the Association of Community Interpreters, but Sanders comments that this is a model that works best where clients are articulate and assertive and know their rights. It is also the most appropriate model for freelance interpreters. Telephone interpreting is included under this model.
- the 'professional team' model, a model arising from particular situations in Britain where bilingual linkworkers evolved particularly for preventive heath campaigns. In Britain the 'Asian Mothers and Baby Campaign' exemplified this, with the interpreter working as part of a team, and trained in the objectives and methods of the team, providing interpreting but also increasing other team members' understanding of the client group and its needs. Housing officer work and mental health work had also in some instances seen such a team approach. Sanders comments this was often a difficult role for interpreters, and many linkworker agencies eventually became advocacy agencies.
- the 'client-centred' model is closely related to advocacy work, and is not confined to interpreting alone but widespread with bilingual workers. The crux of this model is to use language skills to represent the clients' interests, where the point of initial contact is between the NESB client and the interpreter, the interpreter assessing the degree of language assistance needed and using these language skills with relevant agencies. However, this model clearly works only where the interpreter has the support of an organisational structure, and the interpreter must be trained in the ways of the agency. It is considered unrealistic for freelance interpreters. A revealing code of practice is given from the Lambeth Health Authority Interpreting and Translating Service to illustrate this approach, stressing awareness of racism, close contact with the NESB client, accuracy in interpreting, and legitimate ways in which an interpreter can intervene in interviews (Sanders nd: 64).

The variations revealed in practice have also led to professional differences: the degree of interest now shown by the Institute of Linguists in this area of interpreting has led to it introducing 'Public Service' as one of its categories of membership. On the other hand, many interpreters became members of the Association of Community Interpreters, Translators, Advocates and Linkworkers [ACITAL].

This variation of current practice and models of the interpreter's role will be found elsewhere in looking at activities in different countries, and we discuss them further when looking at overall questions of role in the final chapter. One way however in which this diversity affects interpreters in Britain is the lack of one coherent professional ethos, compounded by the lack of professional development opportunities. Indeed professional development opportunities, as much as initial training or better understanding among users, may be a next vital step.

A final important innovation in Britain has been the telephone interpreting service Language Line, established with charity trust money under the leadership of Lord Young of Dartington in 1990. Initially it was set up to provide for language needs in London's East End, but has expanded rapidly to now become a national (and international) service. The history of this service is instructive as it provides a major example of how a public-sector oriented company has managed to survive by embracing certain commercial principles that has enabled it to return a profit and still meet public sector demands. Language Line was established, as has been the case with several other TIS, as a free service to most users, and was subsidised to around two-thirds of its costs. It also introduced a measure of cost recovery from private and some government agencies at a rate of £1 or £1.70 a minute, but suffered severe operating losses in its first years of operation. Becoming a limited liability company and under a new manager, from late 1992 Language Line changed its pricing policy, deciding to charge all users at a standard rate of £5 per minute, with an after-hours rate of £7 per minute. Heavy users could enter contracts providing cheaper rates per call. These seemingly stupendous rates, when compared to previous expenditures on interpreting by these agencies, nonetheless won approval and the vast majority of Language Line clients accepted this charge, enabling the service to return operating profits in subsequent years and embrace new technology, commence training initiatives and expand into translation as well (Pointon et al 1998).

Language Line also cooperated with first AT&T and lately with TIS Australia for back up services in particular languages and after-hours help.

USA

Like Australia, the USA is a classic country of immigration, but the approaches it has developed to many consequential issues of immigration settlement differ from Australian approaches (Freeman and Jupp 1992). The USA through its long historical period of fostering immigration up to the 1920s had believed – understandably in that context – in its enormous assimilationist abilities, disguised in whatever rhetoric ('Melting pot' etc) which tended to define language maintenance and use of LOTEs as largely a private affair. Fishman in his pathbreaking study showing the degree of language maintenance in the USA, aptly entitled *Language Loyalty in the USA* (1966), pointed to the way in which many settlers kept their languages alive in various community endeavours, but equally showed how little the government was concerned with this and how its own policies rarely impinged on this issue. Historically, a few states had been officially bilingual (Louisiana, New Mexico, and the special case of Puerto Rico) and some had accommodated other languages in semi-official ways (eg Pennsylvania), but overall the use of LOTEs had remained strictly in the private sphere. And I/T had never been an issue.

In the USA, I/T as an issue arose in the markedly different situation of post-World War II immigration, but even there arose in a specific context that far more reflected specific American institutions rather than a particular settlement policy: the American government was less directly involved in the kind of settlement services so important to Australia and so central in terms of developing language services. I/T was provided largely on a completely informal basis by family or small communities, with a decided view this was temporary until settlers became Americans, as all previous settlers had seemingly done. But it was legal, and specifically constitutional considerations that caused this to change. A number of court cases in the 1970s discussed whether infringements of defendants' rights had occurred as a result of not using interpreters during stages of legal process (Chapman 1990); but the major constitutional impetus came perhaps not from cases directly involving interpreting but from cases guaranteeing bilingual education, such as *Lau v Nichols* in 1974. The growing constitutional salience of the rights of persons speaking languages other than English finally resulted in the Court Interpreters Act of 1978, which has since that time come to dominate interpreting policy in the USA; indeed, it is the issue of court interpreting that has almost entirely defined the issue of language services as far as American constitutional opinion goes. The 1978 Act provided for interpreters to be used in federal district courts in cases where the accused or witnesses have limited English, and mandated a certification system for court interpreters, run by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

States, albeit slowly, in some cases moved for matching State laws for their own jurisdictions.

Right from the beginning, however, the right to an interpreter that was established was defined in a particular way that mean the generality of the provision was in the end extremely narrowly granted. For a start, the range of languages that are now covered by Federal and most State jurisdictions remains extremely limited if we consider other situations around the world. Spanish is the most important language by far in most jurisdictions (accounting for over 90% of language demand in many) and for a long period of time Spanish was the only language provided for interpreting in the Federal and many other jurisdictions. Languages have spread slowly since then, but even today the range of languages covered by Federal provision is extremely limited – Arabic, Cantonese, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Mien, Polish, Russian and Spanish. Even in many States the range is not substantially greater – in California for example the languages in which there are accredited interpreters are Arabic, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

As with many other language policy issues in the USA, the predominance of Spanish gives language issues a particular orientation to which we will return. However, other issues apart from that of a restricted range of languages confront court interpreting. The issue that has continued to arouse concern is the process of accreditation itself. To implement the Act, a Federal certification board was established which conducts written and oral tests to select those interpreters who meet the standard for federal accredited court interpreters. With thousands of applicants who had previously practised as Court Interpreters applying, many were shocked when in the first rounds of tests the percentage passing was extremely small – approximately 4% in the first rounds of the test (Arjona 1983, de Jongh 1991).

The situation has been a little less severe at State levels in those States that do have accreditation tests. Yet this severity – perhaps quite understandable, and not unfamiliar to other counties with accreditation tests such as Australia – has of course led to a situation where the use of an accredited interpreter is a right, yet provision of such interpreters is often impossible. The use of 'show cause' interpreters (ie where good cause has to be shown to the Court why an uncertified interpreter has to be used in a language where certified interpreters exist) fills the gap where there are no certified interpreters. In many States and for many languages in all States, no accreditation exists, as Dunnigan & Downing cite of Minnesota:

> There [is not] ... any state court interpreter certification process. The practice in the District Court was to take applications from persons interested in employment as court interpreters, have them complete a questionnaire and interview them. The person doing the hiring was not bilingual and therefore interviewed them in English. They were also given a Court Interpreter Manual... and signed an Interpreter Code of Conduct... If there were ever any complaints on the quality of their work, they were not called again (Dunnigan & Downing 1995: 95)

It is important to consider that this legalistic approach has placed the emphasis on one part of interpreting – court interpreting – but also within that on one particular aspect, the testing of interpreters to ensure qualification before a Court. There has been relatively far less concern for training and preparation, and candidates receive little help in preparing for testing: while some universities or professional associations run test preparation courses or certificate level courses, there are no accredited training programs specifically preparing for this field. In the USA, courses for conference interpreting are also scarce, with Georgetown, Hawaii and Monterey providing most of what training there has been, but for court interpreting the first truly professional course – a Master of Arts in Bilingual Legal Interpreting (in Spanish and English) – began only in 1996 at the University of Charleston, South Carolina under Virginia Benmaman. This lack of training and preparation, and emphasis on a once-off test, means the field as a whole still portrays an individualistic ethos. For the most part, court interpreters do not emerge after a long period of rigorous training where exacting linguistic and professional standards of performance are instilled.

Yet almost as a paradox to this lack of training and preparation, the fact that court interpreters are certified in particular jurisdictions means that they have the possibility of quite extensive professional development, probably to a greater extent than any other interpreting field in the world. Thus, in each jurisdiction, interpreters must show participation in professional development to retain their certification, which can be satisfied by attending a broad range of courses covering language, terminology, communication and contextual studies. The system is generally point-based, with a need to gather a certain number of points in a given period, and courses given different point weightings according to how central they are seen to interpreting needs. In very active jurisdictions such as California, an enormous smorgasbord of courses is offered from a large range of educational institutions, both public and private, both in the vocational orientation field and in academic studies (*Polyglot*, passim). Moreover, there are long-standing and extremely active professional associations, such as the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators [NAJIT], or the California Court Interpreting Association, that run conferences, advise on policy, mobilise members on professional and industrial issues, and communicate through excellent newsletters (*Proteus* and *Polyglot* respectively) and, in the case of NAJIT, run a very active home page on the Internet (see Appendix 1).

In the USA this legal focus – the putting up of test cases to construct rights on the basis of general constitutional guarantees – has thus given the language services implicated an extremely strong and prominent presence. By the same token, it also means that a yawning gap has developed between the one area of I/T favoured by such legal protection, and other areas of language services, ranging from medical to welfare to administrative interpreting which has acquired no such privileged position, and remains relatively undeveloped in the USA despite many local initiatives. These fields have stood outside the constitutional guarantees for court interpreters; again, this may be seen as an anomalous situation, as individuals' interests and rights in language matters might be seen to be no less at stake in these non-legal areas. Here, there is no organised system of accreditation, and generally no overall direction of language services from a governmental or public sector viewpoint, but with considerable activity on the local level that has generated important initiatives. Given the relative strength of court interpreting both as a professional field and as having achieved salience in the consciousness of public officials, developments in other areas of interpreting tend to grow up in the shadow of court interpreting, and need to undertake the long march through the institutions – achieving recognition, having some kind of certification, contributing to policy development, and raising consciousness and mobilising practitioners – in order for the field to reach professional standards.

Medical interpreting for example remains a fragmented activity, with now however many similar initiatives coming in various States to begin to professionalise the field (Fortier 1996). A number of individual institutions have innovated here:

- In a draft submission on *Medical Interpreter Standards of Practice*, the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (1995) stated its position bluntly: 'Medical interpreting as a profession is in its infancy', but has been working towards getting a set of standards of practice accepted, and developing training programs – initially at the Community College Certificate level – for medical interpreters. Such initiatives are reflected in other parts of the country, both in professional mobilising and training. For example, hospital or medical interpreter associations have been formed in a number of States, and several hospitals themselves run training programs, either alone or jointly with connected universities. Such courses however are generally of limited duration (often as little as 30 – 50 hours) and of course are not part of professional training courses.
- A more systematic approach worthy of note is that of the collaboration between the Monterey Institute of International Studies [MIIS] and Stanford University Hospital. Among its interpreting courses, Monterey provides a Certificate course in Medical Interpreting, and suitably qualified candidates are able to pursue a 192-hour Internship at Stanford university hospital under the aegis of the Community and Patient Relations Department. While still only a certificate level course, this arrangement provides a very useful prototype on a model used elsewhere in the world for training: coursework plus supervised field practice.
- Institutions such a Stanford Hospital have also been active in other ways, introducing a 24-hour service for interpreters in 1991 (believed to be the first of its kind in the USA) and working to introduce training to all its interpreters. Like many other hospitals in the USA, it also has a Volunteer Language Bank catering for 25 languages.

Currently Washington seems to be the only State with State-wide certification tests for hospital interpreters, with other States having only the kind of institution-specific practices detailed above. In some cases where tests for hospital interpreters have been devised, a background consideration has been fear of lawsuits.

Outside the medical situation, I/T provision and infrastructure is even more patchy and uncoordinated. Individual initiatives in various States can be cited, but the overall picture is not only diversity between States but in many cases great diversity of approach and provision even ***within*** the same State. A typical case of the situation at the State level is that documented by Fritz Hensey (another Geneva Park participant) and David Humphreys at the University of Texas at Austin, who have respectively worked for and surveyed a large number of agencies in their State, and find a totally different set of practices in each State agency. Overall there is a poor understanding of interpreting and translating needs, little appreciation of this as being an issue, and most interestingly perhaps, often diametrically opposed views on the part of different officials in the same agency as to what was being provided in language access services. Hensey reports there were two notable exceptions – the Department of Health has trained some of its personnel to undertake interpreting, and the Texas Employment Commission had appointed a Comprehensive Language Services Coordinator, and introduced guidelines for the employment of interpreters in its Appeal tribunal hearings, of which there were nearly 3,000 a year. The TEC had stipulated using certified interpreters, kept detailed records of interpreting assignments, and besides interpreting also used translation widely to spread information (Hensey, personal communication). Humphreys looked at a range of agencies specifically in relation to their *translation* activities, finding a few agencies worthy of note: the Department of Human Services for example employs translation widely and in an imaginative way:

> Incoming Spanish language correspondence is not only translated so that it might receive a reply or other bureaucratic response, but the linguistic features of such correspondence are recorded so that the outgoing specific response to such correspondence might be geared to the correspondent's own Spanish and, most impressively, so that the Spanish language versions of mass-oriented public information delivery programs sponsored by the DHS might be adapted to what the language access providers at the DHS determine to be the typical Spanish of their typical client. Not only does the DHS employ such a sociolinguistic feedback program with respect to the direct input of its clients; it also actively engages the bilingual members of its field offices as informal consultants... (Humphreys 1995: 17)

How typical or untypical are Hensey and Humphrey's findings will only be discovered by further detailed investigations at the State level.

In the area of I/T training, Bruce Downing at the University of Minnesota has documented present training capacity and even more pointedly the lack of training opportunities in the USA, and interestingly has looked internationally at 25 training institutions for community interpreting (Downing & Helms Tillery 1992). He has followed this up with studies of interpreter provision (and non-provision) in Minnesota in the area of court interpreting (Dunnigan & Downing 1995), and has long been one of the voices arguing for a strong training base for I/T in the USA.

Holly Mikkelson of the Monterey Institute is associated with a significant research and development effort in I/T, an area that is if anything even more neglected than training. As in many other countries, I/T has attracted few high-level researchers; while there are now growing numbers of publications on court interpreting, and Sign Language Interpreting has a strong literature (see below), other areas of I/T in the USA continue to be under-researched. The Monterey Institute has recently established an International Interpretation Resource Center, specifically devoted to community interpreting, providing some training programs (see above), consultations, in-service courses for practitioners (including by distance education), pedagogical seminars, conferences and most of all research and documentation on community interpreting. Its future work in this area promises to be of relevance to the whole field.

Mikkelson and her Center have recently undertaken to review current provision of language services in the USA, looking at the almost total institutional emphasis on court interpreting, and within that on testing and accreditation, and the paucity of organised response in other fields. Herself an expert in court interpreting (Mikkelson 1995; Gonzalez, Vasquez & Mikkelson 1991), she is concerned that a lop-sided view of interpreting can develop that does not attend to the most common situations of language need, and the still peripheral status of interpreters particularly outside of court interpreting means that professionalism and understanding of interpreting on the part of other professions is often lacking.

A final area needing to be considered in relation to language services is Sign Language interpreting. This field in the USA as in Canada has shown considerable growth and development from the 1960s, and in many ways has developed very much further than spoken language interpreting in a relatively short span of time. This has happened essentially outside the framework established for other interpreting services, particularly the court interpreting services. American Sign Language is not one of the languages currently with accredited and registered court interpreters, even though the court systems have traditionally employed this form of interpreting and there have often been provisions for interpreters for the deaf in various State laws and regulations, usually to do with guaranteeing rights for the disabled. SL interpreting remains within the province of deaf associations to organise, train and provide.

However, in terms of research, training and professional ethos SL interpreting could be considered to be the leading field of interpreting in the USA. Significantly, while there is a paucity of training as observed for spoken language interpreting, SL interpreting is relatively well provided for with preparation and training courses, with several dozen long-established courses teaching such interpreting, building on the basis of even more extensive teaching of the languages at a large number of educational institutions. This contrast is well exemplified by the fact that, as mentioned above, the first substantial university-level course in spoken legal interpreting (a Masters level course in Spanish-English) has only recently commenced at Charleston University. Moreover, not only in training, but also in research, ASL interpreting is rather ahead of research in spoken languages interpreting in the USA, with a by now substantial number of doctorates having been done on SL interpreting, and a substantial body of literature produced.

Frishberg's (1990) exemplary study looks at all forms of interpreting historically, deftly placing SL interpreting within this context and going on to analyse its specificity as well. The Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, a national body certifying interpreters for the Deaf began as early as 1964, weathering all storms over the kind of interpreting to recognise (ASL, signed English, speechreading ['lipreading'] etc) and doing much to consolidate expertise and professional careers of its certified practitioners. Training courses took off in a number of colleges, particularly in the 1980s as integration policies of various kinds brought many more deaf students into mainstream educational institutions, necessitating large numbers of interpreters and other personnel to facilitate this mainstreaming. Several Acts relating to disability and rehabilitation specify clients' rights to have interpreters – an important entitlement in the legalistic context of American public policy. Frishberg gives an excellent account of the body of research that has developed in this field. While research on spoken language interpreting has not been negligible, it would be fair to say the work has been patchy, very dependent on a few salient individuals, and lacking a real base of a research institute or critical mass of researchers devoted to this purpose, a gap that now Monterey seems closest to filling.

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The USA scene – which is acknowledged to have only been presented in the broadest possible terms here – presents a series of paradoxes, with

- tight and publicly acknowledged constitutional guarantees for court interpreting, but difficulties in operationalising these guarantees beyond a small number of languages and jurisdictions.
- within the realm of court interpreting, an overt and strongly enforced system of accreditation and registration, but no organised system of training and interpreter and user education.
- despite the lack of pre-service education for court interpreters, an extensive and vibrant professional development orientation, with mandatory continuing education, and relatively well organised professional bodies that maintain this orientation and provide a collegial basis that is relatively rare for this area of interpreting in other countries.
- no integration of SL interpreting with spoken language interpreting provision, but with SL interpreting itself constituting an area of impressive achievements, not least in training and research.
- almost no widely organised language services outside of court interpreting, but considerable local initiatives that attempt to respond to interpreting needs outside of a context of legalism and constitutional guarantees. This area at the moment probably lacks not activism but rather coordination and a degree of institutional understanding.

The legalistic basis of the USA's most impressive accomplishments in language services also serves to define its limits, and in this the area of I/T is not different to a number of other areas of language policy. The USA in recent years has attracted attention not so much for its initiatives in language policy for a multilingual population, as for the overt political moves to retreat from this, as characterised by the English Only movement, a movement often watched with disbelief from outside. However, as significant achievements in American language policy so often depend on a constitutional basis, it is only to be expected that challenges will also come at this level. For other countries in which policy on language services generally stands at a considerable remove from constitutional considerations, and is guided by whatever other policy imperatives, the American experience provides some impressive achievements that are however difficult to replicate elsewhere, as well as some clear gaps and shortcomings that have perhaps been dealt with better elsewhere. Finally, here, of course, it is necessary to observe that almost all discussion of I/T (and many other areas of language policy in the US, such as education or broadcasting) is very influenced by the place of Spanish as the clear majority minority language. Almost all policy attention, and reactions of whatever kind, focus on Spanish, unfailingly bringing into the discourse wider political and social reactions to the speakers of this one language. Less than one third of all people who speak a LOTE in the USA are speakers of Spanish, but in almost every discourse on I/T or language policy – from debates over I/T to congressional hearings on bilingual education to the public pronouncements of the English Only Movement – this relative weight seems to go entirely unheeded. As elsewhere where one minority language is dominant, sensitive political issues are often raised which are perhaps less apparent in other situations where one language group is not so clearly marked.

CANADA

Canada is often regarded as the country perhaps most similar to Australia in terms of immigration settlement and embracing of multiculturalism (Hawkins 1988). Yet for important historical reasons the I/T scene in Canada has developed in some dramatically different ways. Canada's official French/English bilingualism has led of course to a massive investment in language services – particularly translation services – for the country, with all official documents translated between French and English, and detailed protocols at all levels of public life for English/French translation. Interpreting in French and English, on the other hand, is more rare, precisely because of various presumptions of bilingualism which can turn out on occasions to be erroneous.

The fundamental political and social role of official bilingualism in Canada has much impact on the possibilities of effective language services. Indeed, if interpreting in the USA is regarded as virtually synonymous with court interpreting, then the whole question of language services in Canada raises lasting assumptions of French and English. Like other countries having a large immigrant or indigenous population, Canada has a great many other languages, and significant populations that speak little French or English, yet the dominance of official bilingualism has meant that less attention than might otherwise have been the case is paid to I/T. Canada's official bilingualism has also had another, more indirect effect upon language policy: while official bilingualism is a national issue and is carefully maintained and monitored, the French/English split in other ways has led great sensitivity over the rights of Provinces, and in a way peculiar to Canadian federalism has meant that on many issues there is deference to Provincial priorities and programs. Language services, consequently, are almost entirely the responsibility of Provincial governments: a national system of accreditation, for example, or a national language services office or even a national TIS, for example, would be far more difficult to realise than they were in Australia. Also, in contrast to the USA, Canada has a British common law tradition which allows no basis for the kinds of constitutional guarantees that have in the USA provided at least basic national provision of some language services; in Canada, virtually everything is dependent upon policy considerations of Provincial governments.

On the other hand, Canada has had a relatively welcoming set of policies to immigrants, including to non-English or non-French speaking immigrants, and also a set of policies to its indigenous populations that in many ways is a world frontrunner, as detailed below.

Apart from English/French needs, services exist in most Provinces to cater for communication with multilingual populations. The common features of these are:

- none extends beyond the boundaries of a single Province
- the area of non-English/French interpreting is variously called 'community interpreting or 'cultural interpreting'
- almost all Provinces have some hospital-based language services, and most, either on a Provincial or City basis, have various community or cultural interpreter services catering for legal, medical, welfare and administrative fields
- there is no national accreditation for any area of I/T; there has been considerable discussion on this over the last few years but whatever accreditation is done is on a provincial or city basis and for particular fields eg Ontario has introduced certification of court interpreters, and there is discussion over having a national system, but this remains unresolved. The Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa- Carlton, established only in 1993, has been active in developing a 'Cultural Interpreter Language and Interpreting Skills Assessment Tools' [CILISAT] project developing tests which could provide in future a testing basis for accreditation.
- in contrast to English/French education, training of I/Ts in other languages remains piecemeal: a number of certificate level courses have been introduced by various educational institutions, the most active of which is probably Vancouver Community College with a certificate course in court interpreting. The British Columbia Provincial government recognises this award as accrediting court interpreters, as well as a certificate issued by the professional body the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia [STIBC].
- while provinces outside of Quebec generally provide language services for other languages into or out of

English, Quebec provides them primarily in French. One of the innovations in this Province is a cross-sectoral 'Banque interrégionale d'interprètes', comprising some 75 interpreters in 50 languages, to work peripatetically specifically in health and social services. The interpreters here are defined as 'cultural interpreters' as in most other Provinces (Hemlin 1994); they receive an initial training program of 35 hours and monthly in-service training, and must conform to a Code of Conduct.

Despite this apparent lack of national or even Provincial level planning, language services of various kinds have grown, as has activism more generally on I/T: Canada's hosting of the First International Conference on Interpreting in Legal, Health and Community Settings at Geneva Park in June 1995 has reflected this activism and led to renewed activity, with many delegates (from outside Canada as well) keen to keep up contact (Carr et al 1997, *Critical Link Newsletter)*. A second conference will be held in May 1998. And this is occurring despite a negative environment for public services that has seen considerable cutbacks in some Provincial public sector activity. Two similar initiatives in opposite sides of the country are perhaps typical here: a Health Care Interpreter Partnership Project in British Columbia, and an Inter Hospital Interpreter Project in Toronto. The British Columbia project is a two and a half year project funded by the province's Health Research Foundation in which several hospitals, the Vancouver Health Department and the Community College are participating in establishing a health interpreter program covering setting of standards of performance, determining organisational needs and then trialing a training program of health interpreters. Similarly, in the Toronto project eight hospitals from the Hospital Cultural Interpreter Network are pooling their efforts to devise a training program for in-house bilingual staff who work as interpreters but who lack training in it, with the end goal of creating a pool of trained hospital interpreters *(Critical Link Newsletter* December 1995).

While established relatively recently, language services have grown strongly over the past decade. The London Cultural Interpretation Service in Ontario, for example, began in 1989 'after nearly ten years of preparatory work by teams of dedicated volunteers' and now receives over 5000 requests for service a year (Annual Reports). It has also taken an interest in several critical social issues that demanded servicing from interpreters, such as domestic violence. One common feature of language services in the mid-1990s has been severe budgetary cutbacks in many areas as economic crisis bites into public sector expenditure. These cutbacks come at a time when many services are still relatively new and comprehensive infrastructure in terms of accreditation and training still embryonic.

Possibly one of Canada's most notable achievements, and one of relevance to many countries is in relation to language services for indigenous languages. Certainly by contrast to Australia's unsteady progress on this, several of Canada's provinces have made long-term commitments to this issue, particularly Yukon and the North-West Territories [NWT]. Both have adopted Acts to specifically preserve and promote Aboriginal languages; NWT has eight official languages – English, French, and six Aboriginal languages. Monolingual indigenous people can now be elected to the Legislative Assembly and sit on juries, requiring language services to spread into many new areas. NWT has a Language Bureau in its Department of Culture and Communication that deals with I/T needs in all languages, including Aboriginal and immigrant languages as well as French. It began training interpreters in 1979, and set up a legal interpreter program in 1988. NWT also has an active professional association, with interpreter associations for particular indigenous languages also now starting to form. An important training facility has been Arctic College, a multi-campus institution specifically devoted to education for the scattered populations of the north. Arctic College runs a 1-year Certificate or 2-year Diploma in Interpreting in a range of indigenous languages. To accomplish this it has to take on enormously demanding tasks of curriculum and materials development, and overcome severe logistical problems in catering to often very small language groups widely dispersed and often from remote locations. The College attends to all these matters including the accommodation issues for students and their families because of the problems of travelling home with any regularity over long distances.

Canada's work here received extensive coverage in an edition of *Meta* (v.38 no.1, 1993), where several articles described language and I/T policy, training, service provision and problems encountered.

Finally, Sign Language interpreting in Canada, as in the USA, has developed outside of language services for other languages, and in many ways has developed far more solidly. Importantly here, there has been a good deal of interaction between Canada and the USA: American Sign Language is now recognised as one of the languages of the deaf in Canada, along with la Langue des Signes du Quebec [LSQ], though versions of signed English or French are also used. Service provision is city or province based, with for example the Ontario Interpreter Services [OIS] being established by the Ontario Association of the Deaf and the Canadian Hearing Society in 1980, well before later

Cultural Interpreter Services for other languages. But while services are province-based, Canada does have national certification, run by the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada [AVLIC], which also has a Code of Ethics that is accepted throughout Canada. As a result of mainstreaming and integration policies, increasing numbers of deaf children attend local schools, and there has been considerable development of SL interpreting services in the education system, again with AVLIC certification being a stipulated norm. There are a number of training institutions for SL interpreters, mostly for general interpreting tasks but a few concentrating solely on training practitioners for the educational field. As in the USA, SL interpreting seems far in advance of most areas of spoken language interpreting in terms of training, accreditation, attention to various specialisations, organisation of services and associated research and professional development (see details of AVLIC and of York University and other SL agencies in Appendix 1).

SCANDINAVIA

The most mature system of language services, and the one perhaps most directly comparable with Australia's, is in Sweden. With significant migration from the 1960s, Sweden adopted liberal immigration, settlement and citizenship policies and established a comprehensive approach to language services. Sweden also had two significant indigenous minorities – Finns and Sami – with different language polices developing for these two groups. The description here comes from Niske (1990) and Dimitrova (1997).

Swedish immigration differed significantly to that of many countries of continental Europe that adopted 'guest-worker' policies; like Australia, immigration to Sweden was always intended for permanent settlement. Such immigration, which grew strongly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, brought detailed responses to language needs. The main agencies responsible for immigrant settlement were local government and municipal authorities, who began to establish interpreting services from around 1968, with now around 90 municipal language services operating. As well as the involvement of municipal authorities, Sweden had a unique input into language services through its Confederation of Labour Unions, which promoted the right of workers to have interpreters in their workplace, leading to interpreters working in many of the most common immigrant occupations. At the central level, the Swedish government adopted a number of regulations for the recognition of interpreters in administrative contacts between government departments and immigrants, and in courts. The right to an interpreter was thus guaranteed, a significant step for Sweden's institutions and administrative apparatus.

As in the Australian situation, language services and provision for immigrant groups have far exceeded those for indigenous minorities. The Sami have only recently begun to have their language rights recognised; on the other hand, there was some provision for Finnish, with court interpreters in Finnish being provided in some municipalities from the 1940s. However it has only been the influx of immigrants that has established overall training and accreditation procedures, which now include Finnish.

Training has been undertaken at various institutions, initially at the folk high schools that are such a distinctive feature of the Scandinavian education scene. Courses here started as early as 1968, and have generally been of one-year (part-time) courses, catering to a large number of languages. Other adult education institutions have also run shorter courses. Universities have undertaken longer, three to four term training in a smaller but still significant range of languages, with the later terms specialising in medical or legal interpreting. There is only limited training of conference interpreters in Sweden, so this kind of training has largely been directed towards internal needs of institutional-migrant contact. In the 1980s the university courses became coordinated through the Institute of Interpretation and Translation Studies at Stockholm University. This Centre develops teaching materials and curriculum, works on terminology and engages in research on I/T in conjunction with other university departments. Importantly, sign language interpreting is included along with other interpreting in the Institute's work, and takes up a substantial part of its budget, thus forming links between interpreting in different languages and modes.

In 1976 Sweden also introduced a system of State authorisation of practitioners, run initially by the Board of Commerce, now by the National Judicial Board for Public Lands and Funds. Authorisation is granted after an examination or upon completion of a one-year full-time university course, and has so far been granted in over 30 languages. Authorisation is given at either basic level or advanced level, the advanced level being for specialisms in legal or medical interpreting, demanding high level written ability as well as interpreting skills. Examinations also test professional ethics. Significantly, authorisation is given for 5 years, and is renewable without examination for active practitioners, otherwise re-examination is necessary.

An important contribution of Sweden as well has been in research and publication, with Wadensjo (1992, 1995) providing some outstanding analyses of the work of interpreters. Besides the Stockholm Institute, there is active research in such centres as Lund and Linkoping.

In Scandinavia, Sweden's immigration experience stands quite apart. There has been virtually no immigration to Finland or Norway until some very recent refugee intakes, which have started to become significant now in Norway in particular; Denmark did have some immigration during the 1960s and 1970s but of much more limited scope than in Sweden.

Historically, Denmark's institutions for I/T were structured on other imperatives, particularly business needs, and Denmark is probably unique in offering its I/T education primarily in business colleges. The major business colleges run full academic courses for interpreters, with a focus on business and international language needs, but also include an element of legal interpreting, with graduates becoming Authorised Interpreters, and used as such by the Danish court system. However, this system has been restricted to the major European languages, and Denmark has struggled to meet any interpreting needs in other languages.

The work of Martinsen (1996) and Schweda-Nicholson and Martinson (1996) has outlined the way this historical structure has attempted to meet needs in newer languages of refugees and other immigrants. For a long time it was difficult to establish training or authorisation for other languages; sporadic attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to teach what were termed 'administration interpreter programs' did not lead to permanent training programs, and it was only with the involvement of the Danish Refugee Council in the early 1990s that programs were established to link the Business School training to training for these newer languages. However training for the refugee and immigrant languages does not include training for court interpreting and does not lead to authorisation. In most of these languages there are no or few Authorised Interpreters, with government agencies thus being in the predicament of having clear expectations on the part of the legal or administrative system that there should be interpreters for institutional-immigrant contact, but often not having interpreters in the newer languages. Various ad hoc means have been tried particularly by police and in courts and hospitals to meet this need.

Meanwhile in Norway, with even less migration than Denmark until very recently, there have been some quite rapid moves to introduce language services when significant numbers of refugees and displaced persons were accepted by Norway in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Norway has introduced language services and commenced training, with a one-semester interpreter training course run in several languages by the University of Oslo. Norway is also exploring the possibility of some kind of accreditation system. Its services are based largely on local government structures, with its Department of Immigration providing planning and coordination. In the larger cities such as Oslo, Trondheim or Bergen, interpreters are employed full-time by local governments, supplemented by sessionals. This has been a significant commitment by the local government authorities, who are feeling their way in this new immigration situation but are very mindful of the service provision model of Sweden, with its historically much longer and more elaborate services.

A particular issue of these services has been, as commonly found elsewhere, to convince government or private agencies to use interpreters, though use has now increased with some limited training provided to those working with interpreters.

WESTERN EUROPE

Holland, Belgium and France

Surprisingly little information in international literature is available on the I/T situation in Holland, which has had an extensive history of immigration, both from its former colonial areas (particularly Surinam), and its industrial expansion of the 1960s and 1970s. Its liberal regime of allowing citizenship to settlers and its generally social democratic approach to social services brings it closer to the Swedish model of immigration than perhaps its German neighbour. Holland has had Europe's oldest established Telephone Interpreter Service, begun in 1976 to meet communication needs between government institutions and non-Dutch speakers. This was established as 6 Tolken Centrum in major centres across Holland, which now established a firm network that provides TIS services 24 hours a day. The service is directly funded by the government, and is devoted primarily to settler-institutional interactions, doing little commercial or translation work. A system of Sworn Interpreters and Licensed Translators has evolved for government and in particular court work, but with little training or targeting of languages in need (Diddens-Wischmeyer 1993).

Moving to Belgium and France, the issues of response to the migrant presence in these countries is often conceptualised differently, and while interpreters and interpreting are recognised as important for communication, the attempts that have been made to solve communication problems usually take a wider focus, seeing interpreting as only one part of what needs to happen in response to settler issues, and seeing practitioners involved in communication between migrants and institutions as having a much broader role than that of interpreter alone.

Two examples are presented here. The first, from Flanders in Belgium, is that of 'Intercultural health mediators', a project begun in 1991 to improve intercultural communication in health settings particularly in relation to Turkish and Arabic patients. Financed by a number of ministries covering education, health, welfare and employment, the project employs and trains intercultural health mediators, mixing part-time training with employment in numerous health settings, the training extending over three years and resulting in a certificate of higher secondary technical education. Of particular interest is the way that the role of the intercultural health mediators is defined, as it involves interpreting but this is seen as only part of their brief. Intercultural mediation consists of several main tasks – consultations with health professionals (particular emphasis is put on links with social workers); education of these groups; providing migrants with information about the health/welfare system; interpreting; and advocacy within the health system.

The project descriptions recognise the importance of interpreting withing this context, but also firmly point to its limits, and stress the wider role expected of the mediator:

> Mediation cannot be equated with *interpreting*. Interpreters convert what is said by one person into the language of some other person.
>
> Mediation comprises any activities which help to make sure that on the one hand ***a real understanding*** is created between social worker and client and on the other hand, that the ***right to proper health care*** is realised in practice. This requires from the mediator an ability to attack all aspects which may hinder a fluent communication. Because there is a wide range of problems: lack of knowledge on the client's resp. social worker's way of thinking, lack of knowledge about how the health services work, pre-judice, insufficient attention to non-verbal behaviour, application of incorrect strategies to solve communication problems (such as talking in telegram style, or the use of children as interpreters), negligence with respect to patient's information, unspoken expectations, fear for violating taboos: each of these problems may cause communication to go up in smoke. [Emphasis in original] (Centrum Etnische Minderheden en Gezondheid 1992: 6)

France has also adopted the description of 'cultural interpreter', as described by Michel Sauvetre of Inter-Service Migrants of Paris at the Geneva Park conference. Their task is also described as broader than that of an interpreter *per se*, having a pro-active, informative, educational and in some cases advocacy role, much along the lines of the intercultural health mediators in Belgium, and also reflecting assumptions of cultural interpreting in Canada. The importance of such a wider role is stressed particularly where institutions have had a tradition of assimilation and quite aggressive monolingualism, and where attitudes towards immigrants and their situation can often be negative. More pointedly, interpreters inevitably find themselves in situations where cultural assumptions and misunderstandings often arise in the context of interpreting, which must be addressed. This seems particularly important also in a situation where there are vocal anti-immigration movements in France with considerable political salience. At the same time, official government rhetoric has slowly shifted in recent years from a previous stress on monolingualism and the importance of supporting and strengthening French to an increasing awareness of other languages and France becoming a more multilingual country. Inter-Service Migrants' cultural interpreters are now in increasing demand as more and more public institutions and private professionals are confronting greater numbers of non-French speaking clients.

France Inter-Service Migrants also began a TIS in 1989. It now earns roughly half its income from selling its services through cost-recovery mechanisms from public service institutions. Its brief is specifically public-sector interpreting, providing a 24-hour service in a large number of languages covering the whole of France. One other function of France Inter-Service Migrants is that of *'Ecrivain public'* – 'Public writer'. This apparently unique service assists those needing to write correspondence to public sector organisations, but who lack the French to do so – a variation of translation that has now been formalised and constitutes an important part of the work of the agency.

This is a need that has been relatively rarely recognised in other countries, though helping with correspondence has always been a part of translators' work elsewhere; in France the Ecrivain public is perhaps a serendipitous outcome (in linguistic terms) of its legalistic and highly bureaucratic public sector culture that often demands copious correspondence of its clients.

Again, as with the Low Countries, there is little international literature which details the operations of interpreter services in France.

In October 1995 a meeting at Strasbourg was attended by language services from 14 European countries, specifically to compare approaches to interpreting for migrant integration. Despite great differences in orientation to migrants on the part of host societies and institutions, and to the organisation of services, this meeting served to identify a number of common problems that beset all services (see Appendix 1, France).

Germany and Austria

Perhaps even less information is generally available about the German-speaking countries and their internal I/T needs, with interest in publishing about this area only slowly emerging. Information mainly from Franz Pochhacker in Vienna, also a Geneva Park participant, allows a few descriptions to be made given the lack of serious reference material. Pochhacker (1997) is one of the few figures with an international reputation in I/T who has looked at these internal I/T needs in German-speaking countries, Christine-Jacqueline Driesen (1988) being another. Both Germany and Austria of course have formidable traditions particularly in translation (literary, scientific) and in conference interpreting, but these countries were among the least responsive in Europe to the multilingual populations that moved there from the 1960s to power the economic miracles. Austria also had a significant contact throughout this period with Eastern Europe and countries further south-east, while Germany through its liberal refugee admission program also in the last decades attracted large numbers of refugees with many different languages. Attitudes to non-German speakers were at best cool, with language inadequacies clearly blamed on the non-German speakers themselves. Communication with institutions was done on a completely ad hoc basis, with the tradition of bring-your-own interpreter continuing to the present day.

Pochhacker argues that three areas of interpreting can now be identified in Austria: conference interpreting; legal interpreting; and community interpreting – an interesting distinction often not made in other countries; legal imperatives have clearly come to the fore. Pochhacker points to the enormous differences in preparation, professionalism and prestige in these three areas, with community interpreting far and away the poor cousin, and legal interpreting having gained particular salience as one of the first institutional areas that has been forced to take multilingual clientele seriously. The legal area in Germany is also identified by Driesen (1988) as that most challenged by the issue of non-German speakers, with increased emphasis on providing interpreters to ensure due process for non-German speakers. Court interpreting in the German-speaking countries and more generally in Europe has also gained the attention of AIIC, with its Commission on Court and Legal Interpreting, chaired by Driesen, holding an International Symposium on Court Interpreting, in Vienna in 1991, primarily for court interpreters from Central and Eastern Europe. In a report of the Symposium the involvement of AIIC in supporting court interpreters was posed in an interesting way: 'to bring conference-room standards to the court room' (Katschinka 1992: 29).

With the general lack of interpreting provided in other institutions, the German-speaking countries perhaps surprisingly are heading somewhat in the USA-style legalistic orientation to language services. This is also partly driven by wider European legislation that has stipulated the use of interpreters where persons before courts do not understand the language of that court, for example the Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Courses in interpreting now in Germany and Austria increasingly include legal interpreting as part of the curriculum, and an accreditation system is emerging in Austria for court interpreters, and State governments in Germany also looking to some system of registration or accreditation.

Finally, in 1994 Germany established a small telephone interpreting service, in a joint venture between France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom, but this service differs from France Inter-Service Migrants and the Dutch TIS in being entirely oriented to the major European languages, and oriented to the business market.

Multilingualism without Interpreting: the Middle East and Asia

Proof that often quite radical multilingualism can exist without much concern for providing language services can be found in many countries east of the Mediterranean. Indeed, even still on the European continent, countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece have done little in terms of developing language services even though these countries long ago stopped being countries of significant emigration and have become countries of considerable multilingual immigration. This holds even more true for many countries of the Middle East and Asia, and only a few have made provisions for language services.

Israel is an excellent example of this, having attracted population from Eastern Europe and Africa in recent years, yet not attending to language services even though the number of non-Hebrew speaking inhabitants is growing. The time-honoured response of trusting to ubiquitous multilingual individuals to broker language situations is continuing. There are at present no language services and no system of accreditation for interpreters for local language needs, and education is almost entirely restricted to more or less traditional translation studies. Yet Israel interestingly enough has some outstanding individual practitioners who have also been important in developing language services elsewhere, as well as publishing and researching – Ruth Morris (1990, 1995, Colin & Morris 1996), and Myriam Schlesinger in particular (1988, 1989, 1991) who have been prominent especially in legal interpreting. One of the few times that Israel has come to notice in I/T is for some significant war crimes trials, which have given Israeli interpreters considerable exposure at the time (Morris 1990), and whose resonances have extended as far as Australia.

Moving further east and south, I/T becomes increasingly used for external needs only, with the main exception perhaps being India where significant translations of official documents and literature (but little interpreting) takes place among the nine official languages (and often English) and many smaller ones. With regard to the Middle East, it should be noted that this has become now a region of massive international labour movement, and indeed is probably now the part of the world that demonstrates classic 'guest-worker' approaches to its increasingly multilingual workforce. At the moment, there is little likelihood that language services of any kind would develop for these internal needs. Japan, with a growing labour force from other countries as well, and a labour force that enjoys little status or official recognition, could perhaps be put in this same category.

Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong

These countries stand out in terms of having some policies for internal I/T needs; all of them are countries of multiracial and multilingual populations, but the traditional linguistic division of labour has now been made more complex with often significant immigration and movement of populations especially in Singapore and Malaysia. In Malaysia, the government has taken the most far-reaching steps, establishing a well-resourced National Institute of Translation with a direct service role, operating both as an external-oriented company to assist Malaysia's trade and business efforts, but also an internal language service providing translation and interpreting for local institutions. Legal interpreting has emerged as a particular area of need (Khoon 1990) with all courts having teams of interpreters who enjoy a career structure: there are three categories of court interpreter – student, certified, senior – and interpreters are integrated into the administration system, performing other duties when not interpreting, as well as doing translations. Medical interpreting and other institutional contacts are also significant, and local I/T needs are recognised in the I/T training program at the University of Malaya.

Singapore has been less comprehensive in its approach but recently has been developing a system of Remote Interpretation for its courts by using the technology of video-conferencing, enabling a central panel of interpreters to service courts in various localities, a suggestion that has occasionally been heard in other countries but with little experimentation as yet. Otherwise Singapore seems to have paid little systematic attention to I/T needs, with only a miniscule I/T training program at the National University of Singapore, and no significant language services outside of courts.

In Hong Kong, English was the only official language of the colony until 1974, and consequently Hong Kong has always had an extremely comprehensive court interpreting system where British justice was exercised largely on Chinese subjects by – English-speaking British judges. Chinese Language Officers interpreted and translated for courts but also other arms of the administration and government, and I/T can be said to have been an aspect of government functions and performed by career public servants, rather than by an independent profession. Overall, the acceptance of Chinese as a second official language caused an initial *decline* in the need for I/T services by government, though in some cases courts are still presided over by monolingual English judges. This, as many other facets of life in Hong Kong is liable to change with resumption of Chinese power in 1997, though it is not clear that British or English-language influence will be totally absent after this date. However, many other translation needs arose which eventually offset any downturn in legal and administrative interpreting, and the need to translate all official documents has now increased with the impending handing over of power to China. A feature of Hong Kong I/T is the relatively strong I/T education sector, with some seven tertiary institutions running various I/T courses at BA or Master's level. Increasingly, trained practitioners are finding work in the private sector as well as government.

New Zealand/Aotearoa

While sharing many elements of cultural and institutional similarity, Australia and New Zealand have differed significantly both in terms of immigration policies and policies towards their indigenous peoples, with consequent contrasts in language policy. NZ had a far less extensive post-war immigration scheme than Australia, and retained for far longer a more homogeneous Anglo-Celtic population. On the other hand, NZ started to have strong migration from the Pacific from the 1970s, which has begun to affect its population and language profile. In contrast to Australia's diverse Aboriginal groups, the Maori of NZ had one language, and the strength of Maori resistance to white invasion, terminated only by a treaty, meant their accommodation with white NZ was always one that recognised their influence on the wider NZ culture. NZ has made Maori an official language and supported Maori maintenance, and while the overwhelming proportion of Maoris also speak English, the recognition of Maori has also made NZ generally more sensitive to language issues.

I/T needs are met still in largely ad hoc fashion. Auckland and Wellington have some language services in hospitals, police and legal work and other public sector services, but there is no overall coordination of language services or accreditation system for practitioners. The Auckland Institute of Technology through the work of Sabine Fenton has established a number of certificate courses, with specialisations in community, health, legal and conference interpreting, but to the present this remains the only training institute (Fenton 1993).

Interestingly, NZ has a quite active private sector in translation services, with the New Zealand Translation Centre Ltd particularly prominent with a high volume of work and strong links to business and overseas clients.

NAATI has taken an interest in NZ and effectively remains the closest accreditation authority for New Zealanders. It has been testing in NZ on a regular basis for several years – a significant initiative on its part – but there is no official link with any NZ government agency.

NZ's I/T needs remain relatively small but also are little researched, with most language services embryonic and still feeling their way. Some more systematic cooperation particularly with NAATI but potentially with some other Australian language services could be of considerable benefit.

South Africa

We conclude our brief survey in South Africa. The end of apartheid in this country among other changes brought to the fore the linguistic complexity of the nation and raised expectations of rapid responses to the reality of a multilingual South Africa. It should be said however that at certain levels of the State, even under apartheid there was considerable attention paid to multilingualism particularly as it affected the law and security matters. While Afrikaans and English were the two official languages of the country, courts and police did use the various African languages in their work, and defendants or witnesses not speaking either official language were provided with interpreters. Indeed, in what is definitely a landmark initiative in our international survey, the formal training of court interpreters in South Africa commenced as long ago as 1957, and since then training has gradually encompassed all the major languages of South Africa. Training of interpreters was made part of the legal infrastructure and was undertaken by Justice College, which trains court officials and provides post-graduate training of magistrates and prosecutors. Virtually all courts in South Africa employ interpreters, and there are presently a somewhat staggering 1500 full-time court interpreters in South Africa (Kok, personal communication; Kok n.d.). There have also been a significant number of translators employed as civil service officers to translate documents in line with official English-Afrikaans bilingual policies, much as in the case of French-English in Canada, or Flemish-French in Belgium.

The end of apartheid saw nine African languages join Afrikaans and English, giving a total of 11 official languages – a daunting issue for the new democracy (Beukes 1992). This has led to the rapid organisation of language services in areas as diverse as parliament, health, education and social welfare, though it has been difficult to make more than ad hoc provision in many areas. It should be said that there is no desire to provide language services immediately for all combinations of these languages; for example several languages will perhaps almost never be used in parliament, or their use will only be in institutions in specific regions, but other languages eg Xhosa or Zulu, will be widely used. As many African languages were not vehicles of higher education or advanced training, there are enormous problems of training interpreters and translators, even though it is universally recognised they are needed. During apartheid, South Africa had a number of I/T programs in universities, though many were English/Afrikaans only and there is still no systematic training for practitioners in indigenous languages. Even for the legal system, with its long tradition of training, this training proceeds largely by an apprentice system: recruits are tested by the Chief Interpreter of a court or district, then receive a 3-week training course in Pretoria, then interpret under supervision, with regular inspections for the first two years of practice. The only qualification to apply is ability to pass the set test in at least three of the prescribed 11 languages.

A National Language Project has been established for language planning in many areas including I/T, producing a lively Journal *Bua,* and a Pan South African Language Board will develop further policy, .

Athalia Crawford in her paper to the 1st World Congress of African Linguistics (1994) outlined the desperate situation in many South African hospitals where doctors and patients did not share a language. In the larger city teaching hospitals, no provision was made for African languages, but in smaller rural hospitals a method was used to overcome language problems: in a Xhosa area, Xhosa-speaking nurses or nursing assistants would be assigned with a doctor for Xhosa speaking patients to interpret, a role resented by the nurses. Crawford carefully covers both the linguistic aspects and the socio-cultural aspects – particularly the lingering effects of racism – on this situation. While it will be important to provide interpreters, issues of power and culture need to be directly confronted:

> In the present construction of medical discourse in the day hospitals, it seems that the voice of the non-English speaking patient will be heard to the extent that their interpreter's contested and ambivalent position is made conscious and laid open for negotiation. (Ibid: 22)

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Having covered such a wide range of countries, it may be useful to summarise the some of the salient points of comparison in the following table. In the next chapter, we compare more directly Australian developments in I/T with the diversity of practices around the world.

TABLE: Summary of provision

– Language service components for meeting internal communication needs between institutions and multilingual populations.

	TIS	**Training**	**Public sector services**	**Private sector services**	**Accreditation**
Holland	+	-	(+)	+	(+)
UK	+	+	(+)	+	(+)
USA	+	(+)	(+)	+	(+)
Sweden	(+)	+	+	+	+
Denmark	-	(+)	-	+	(+)
Norway	-	(+)	+	-	-
Germany	(+)	-	(+)	+	-
Austria	–	(+)	-	(+)	(+)
Australia	+	+	+	+	+
Malaysia	-	(+)	(+)	+	-
Singapore	(+)	-	-	(+)	-
France	+	-	(+)	+	-
Italy	-	-	-	+	-
Canada	-	(+)	+	+	-
South Africa	-	(+)	+	(+)	(+)

( ) indicates where particular feature is rudimentary or partial, such as where accreditation is for one sector only eg court interpreting

Chapter 9

Australian and international experience: comparisons and contrasts

The survey of international experience shows many shades of response to what can be identified as fairly common issues of language needs. This section draws together these experiences to see how Australian and overseas experiences can be compared, and what distinctive or benchmarking features can be identified in various countries. Blewett's confident assertion nearly a decade ago that 'Australia leads the world' now needs to be looked at in the light of significant developments in I/T in many countries in recent decades.

A clear list of areas where Australia can be said to be ahead of the game can still be identified, though I would hazard that the differences today are not as great as when Blewett wrote.

Distinctive features of I/T in Australia – things Australia does well

1. A national accreditation system

Australia's accreditation system which encompasses all I/T work, from bilingual aide to paraprofessional interpreter to professional interpreter and translator to international conference interpreter and technical translator, all within one set of levels certainly is unique. However, it should be borne in mind that other countries may have different models to begin with, for example where the international I/T profession is strong, we may see more profession-based approaches. Some countries do have partial systems of accreditation for specific sectors, or have other devices such as certified 'sworn translators' common in many European and Asian countries. Australia's approach has been to establish a national accreditation body, NAATI, which defined levels of accreditation, and then embarked on a multifaceted program to:

- persuade practitioners to gain accreditation
- persuade employers and users to demand accreditation
- approve training courses for accreditation
- test candidates itself to give them accreditation
- help establish a national professional body for practitioners.

NAATI at no stage has had legislative backing to ensure public sector organisations or other bodies would use only accredited practitioners, and there has still been no registration of practitioners to guarantee ethical standards, identification of actual practitioners or mandate professional development. Thus, NAATI has had to work largely by persuasion.

Importantly, the accreditation process was not profession-driven but authority driven, a process perhaps at odds with the European tradition of a profession controlling its own field and recruitment (eg on the AIIC model), but quite understandable in a context where there was no established profession and many practitioners had anything but a professional conception of their own work. Moreover, to have an authority-driven model is not an unusual outcome of policy-making in Australia where the state has been quite interventionist in what it sees as a largely immigration matter.

While the migrant language orientation of NAATI is paramount, it should be noted that Australia represents an unprecedented degree of inclusiveness in accreditation by also including within the NAATI structure two categories of languages that in almost every other country stand quite remote from systems of interpreting accreditation or from other language service provision: these are Auslan (Australian Sign Language), and indigenous languages. NAATI accredits in all these languages and approves courses (so far only at the paraprofessional level) in them. In most other countries there is little interchange between these different language categories.

2. Integration of accreditation, training, language services

In inviting us to celebrate Australia's achievements in I/T, Blewett's stress is on the *integration* that has been achieved, linking

- the provision of I/T services
- the accreditation of practitioners
- training of these practitioners.

It is perhaps one of the surprises of looking around the field internationally that this basic troika has seldom been achieved elsewhere. Even in countries where there has been a mandated drive to obtain interpreting services (again the USA can serve as a good example), and where field-specific accreditation has been enforced, training is still often non-existent. Moreover, in many other countries where policy initiatives have been taken to provide some kind of language service, and where no accreditation levels are defined, training is often regarded in minimalist terms – training for a few hours or a few weeks at most in many instances. A further aspect of training which is also rarely encountered in other countries is training those professionals who work with interpreters, something that has now become quite routine for language services or training institutions in Australia to offer, and for public or even some private bodies to build into staff training. This essential integration is what marks the few countries that have achieved some level of comprehensiveness.

3. Professional level training

It is perhaps one of the strongest sources of amazement about I/T in Australia that there can be professional-level university courses to train practitioners in this field. In many other countries training for this kind of I/T work is still either unobtainable or restricted to short courses, or courses of less than tertiary education level. Getting university education in I/T to work with local multilingual populations is still very much the exception. It should be noted, of course, that other aspects of this field are perhaps not so rosy in Australia: the courses in Australia are continually under threat for their cost and small student numbers, and a couple of professional-level courses have disappeared since Blewett wrote, including the one she helped to establish in Adelaide! Moreover, Australia has never had translation, for example, as a serious and widely acknowledged academic field as it is in so many other countries. And yet the achievement of university level courses is important in establishing I/T as a profession (often to some amazement on the part of those using interpreters). Elsewhere in the world, courses are struggling still to become established even in such large jurisdictions as the USA. The UK's Diploma of Public Sector Interpreting has given a boost to training in that country, which was previously only of the short course variety. In Europe outside of Sweden, where training exists at all, it usually consists of relatively short courses (often a semester or less) and there is usually little connection whatever between I/T schools training for conference interpreting and technical translation, and those courses training interpreters who will work for the same country's internal communication needs.

4. Government assumption of obligation to provide language services

For I/T in Australia, this is the level at which government macro policy has been the most decisive. For really quite fortunate and particular historical reasons, when Australia pursued a large post-war immigration program, the government defined itself as having a particular obligation to settlers: if it had deliberately brought non-English speaking immigrants to Australia, it must assume the obligation of helping them to settle into the new country. The Australian government provided English teaching to the new arrivals (which still remains a large commitment to new immigrants today), and as time went by and English was clearly not going to be universally learnt to a high enough level, the government started to provide I/T services for communication needs between non-English speaking migrants and Australian institutions. The various governments in Australia have always maintained this obligation, and the clearly established principle is that it is the government and not the individual immigrant, who pays for the service. Language difficulties are not seen as a matter for the individual, but for the government and its various services. This overall commitment has been crucial to the development of the wide range of I/T services we find in Australia today.

5. Access and equity

Following on from the previous point, access and equity is now stressed in all federal and State bureaucracies, and is enshrined as a principle of public sector work. This means that at a very general policy level, provision will be made for language services. This commitment has been maintained even though in Australia in recent years, as elsewhere, we have seen significant rationalisations of the public sector and considerable reorganisation in some instances of public language services; so far, however, while forms of provision and organisation of services has altered (with increasing cost-recovery and some degree of privatisation and tendering out), actual commitment to provide for use of language services has not diminished, and even very economist rationalist governments have stressed the importance of language services for communication with clients of non-English speaking background. The decentralisation of budgets and some measure of withdrawal by governments in Australia from direct service provision and responsibility may signal it may be harder to sheet home responsibility for non-use of language services on the part of some bureaucracies, but on the whole commitments to language services have been remarkably well maintained in economically difficult times. To what extent further drives to rationalise or privatise will affect language services is unclear; so far, however, while arguments go on over whether for example private or public services should be particular providers, there has been no official retreat from the principle that language services must be provided.

Again, training the staff who work with interpreters is also crucial, and in Australia this has been seen as important in training courses from professional courses for doctors and lawyers to training public contact staff in social security or other public bureaucracies. This is also now being picked up in a number of other countries foe example the UK. This training, which may be viewed as a small point in overall issues of training and provision, is nonetheless important as it does ensure that interpreters are not the only ones who care about interpreting or see it as a relevant service. If the expectation that one will as a matter of course work with interpreters in one's profession comes with one's own training, it makes it much easier to ensure responsiveness to interpreting needs in the future. Where this is explicitly seen as part of access and equity obligations in one's work, training brings this message home even more strongly.

6. Generalist orientation in accreditation

Australia has firmly decided against a system of accreditation that deals with separate fields of interpreting work: thus, the NAATI system accredits Professional level Interpreters or Translators as generalists, not as for example 'court' interpreters or 'medical' translators. Whether this generalist approach has a downside is considered below, but certainly on the up side it has meant a fairly uniform consideration of interpreting as a need across a whole range of institutions – medical, legal, welfare, community – that is often not the case in other countries. The emphasis on the general level of skill required, plus some knowledge and familiarity with all the above fields, is often the model of the freelance or even full-time employed interpreter, with specialisation being the exception. This approach has served well to establish language needs and response across the board, and it has meant that certain areas of interpreting have not been left in the shade. Needs in mental health, in education, in the law and in medicine are all each as likely to be catered for at whatever standard. Several of the major language services in Australia are also generic across fields of expertise, though specialist services (particularly in the health sector) have also developed. NAATI has now begun to consider whether accreditation levels need to be supplemented by endorsement for particular specialisms, but the model clearly being followed is that specialisation needs to build on a generalist base.

This generalist orientation has consequences for the image of the field as a whole. Thus, in Australia one debate that has been avoided is what one could call the 'adjectival' debate over interpreting: in many other countries where an I/T profession of the international kind had already strongly established itself, this new field of interpreting could only be defined as a marked variant of the interpreting that was already there, ie international conference interpreting. Thus, we found a plethora of descriptions to try to capture what this new breed of interpreters were doing when interpreting for multilingual populations and public institutions: this field has been and is variously called 'community' interpreting, or 'cultural' interpreting, or 'contact' or 'welfare' or 'dialogue' or 'bilateral' interpreting, or 'ad-hoc interpreting or even 'escort' interpreting! In Australia, the interpreting comes in an unmarked variety – the sort of interpreting practised in Australia is, simply, 'interpreting' (Gentile 1996). The small number of international conference interpreters have not had the influence to define the field in contradistinction to their own work, indeed in Australia it is international conference interpreting that may well be the marked variety.

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While the above points identify where Australia has made significant running on I/T issues and is perhaps ahead of many other countries, it is equally possible to identify areas where developments in some overseas countries leave Australia behind. This is certainly not to suggest that all overseas countries are ahead of Australia in the specified examples, but that some strong models do exist elsewhere that are of relevance to Australia and potentially many other countries. If it is felt others can learn from Australia re accreditation or training or language services, Australia in turn could well learn from other countries' experiences in a number of areas:

Things that some other countries seem to do better than Australia

1. I/T in Indigenous languages

The immigration-oriented nature of many contemporary language services is acknowledged in the foregoing discussion. In general too, we can say that the provision of language services for internal communication needs reflects in large part overall social ideologies towards immigration. Even sharper as a guide to social attitudes is provision of language services for communication between indigenous languages and mainstream institutions. In Australia this has been a stop-start affair. Aboriginal languages have been brought within the NAATI system, and there was a spurt of activity to train and accredit interpreters and provide some language services in the early 1980s, but this stalled in the late 1980s and early 1990s, needing a considerable effort from 1995 to revive activity in this area.

Here, Canada clearly stands out as a model, as is well illustrated in the impressive edition of *Meta* devoted to this field (No.38, 1/1993). Canada has worked hard to develop, maintain and support language services in a number of indigenous languages in its north and north-west. Efforts have been made from the late 1970s to establish language services in several native languages, and to establish effective training for practitioners, most spectacularly through the operations of Arctic College, which attends to the very real problems associated with training groups that are widely dispersed and often with little familiarity with western-style training methods. Arctic College addresses all the needs of trainees including accommodation for families and other vital support during training.

Every reason ever advanced in Australia as to why interpreting services in indigenous languages are difficult or impossible to provide have been met, and substantially answered, in the Canadian case, demonstrating the greater effectiveness of Canadian approaches and reflecting what is probably a more settled acceptance of indigenous rights and needs than is the case in Australia, where reconciliation is still a prior agenda item in indigenous-mainstream interactions. We have covered the present state of I/T in indigenous languages in Australia in Chapter 7 and since 1995 we have seen a more determined effort to come to grips with these issues on the part of NAATI and many other organisations, but in real terms in Australia this is still an area of substantial neglect.

2. Court interpreting

One of the consequences of Australia's generalist levels of accreditation is that no particular emphasis has been placed in either accreditation or training systems on specialist areas of interpreting such as court interpreting, or for that matter other specialist fields. Yet in many other countries this is a premium area of interpreting, receiving a significant degree of attention from state institutions and at least one powerful profession. This is obviously the case in those countries such as the USA where constitutional considerations have given this area a primacy, as discussed earlier. Yet in other countries also, despite a less adversarial constitutional basis, legal systems themselves have moved to have specialist court interpreters and view this area with favour. Even in a country such as Austria, where Franz Pochhacker argues that conference interpreting is 'absolutely dominant', the field of court interpreting has ben recognised and is now developing its own accreditation system. Court interpreting is viewed as highly skilled work, and it is significant that a number of conference interpreters have become interested in this area and are involved in practice, training or publishing in it. In Denmark, business schools are mandated to provide training for court interpreters (defined in slightly broader terms as 'authorised interpreters'); in this case, provision has not quite caught up with practice as the schools teach only in the major EU languages, while the actual language demands in the legal system are far more diverse; however, the status of the area is clearly established. In the USA also, only relatively few languages are covered by present systems (at the moment only eight at the federal level), so constitutional imperatives do not necessarily lead to widespread provision.

It is possible, of course, for a generalist orientation to be critical of such a specific focus and specialisation: after all, is the focus on court interpreting because there is something inherently more important or difficult or demanding in court situations; because court interpreting is more difficult, say, than medical or mental health or counselling interpreting? Or does this attention to court interpreting merely reflect the prejudices and status of the powerful legal profession? However one argues this, in Australia there is no systematic approach to the question of specialist areas such as court interpreting. Only the Victorian Interpreting /Translating Service (VITS) runs a specialist legal interpreting service and a Legal Orientation Course for interpreters, and no training institutions prepare specialist legal interpreters. As previously mentioned, NAATI is now starting to look at this issue of specialisms complementing generalist professional accreditation, but Australia still is a long way from developing a definite specialism in the legal area with focused training, professional development and research.

3. Research and clearing house activities

The rather abysmal scene generally on research in I/T around the world should not blind us to the fact that in some countries significant attempts are being made not only to do research but to disseminate this knowledge through clearinghouse activities and information exchange. An excellent example of this is the Monterey International Center for Interpretation, which is becoming an international clearinghouse on all aspects of interpreting. Another area that is worthy of mention is the considerable research effort that has gone on particularly in the USA and Canada into sign language interpreting – in fact, there is probably as much research in this area in terms of PhDs and published conference papers as for the whole of liaison interpreting for spoken languages. Yet Australia, for all its pride in its model of language services, has itself contributed little to the research field, even though there certainly is a substantial body of practice to research. Also, Australian practitioners or educators, with a few individual exceptions, often are unaware of overseas research and information. It is as if because the Australian I/T field more or less had to invent itself, it could not rely on assistance from anywhere else because Australia saw itself as having a unique I/T situation; yet as this study has so far shown, situations are rarely unique to Australia.

It is no longer enough to see research as an 'academic' or peripheral activity for I/T. Research is needed here for two different but related purposes. First, it is folklore among practitioners that interpreting or translating in this field demands not only linguistic skill, but a whole complex of interpersonal skills, social understanding, institutional awareness and contextual knowledge to really be able to work effectively. However, for the most part that is where it stays, at the level of folklore, as the research work that has been done so far is rudimentary: we only have the vaguest models of the complexity we claim. There has been some work internationally on courtroom interaction, but other interpreting encounters have only been studied in a small corpus of work by researchers in the USA or Scandinavia, and such studies have only in two or three cases in total been carried out in Australia. Without this research, we do not have an intellectual basis to present the field to others, thereby we do not get resources to do more research to help us understand our own practice or explain the field to others, thus contributing to a vicious circle of lack of research leading to lack of recognition leading to further lack of research.

Secondly, from a language services perspective, increasingly demands are now being made of services that they justify their rationale, *modus vivendi* and organisation upon some knowledge basis. Language services everywhere are in the position of being under almost continuous 'review', and this is certainly not an Australian phenomenon alone, yet often even basic data is not collected on activities, and reviews are carried out and reforms implemented based upon little knowledge. Even for self-defence, such research and information on one's own service and potential comparisons with others (including those overseas) are seldom pursued.

4. Interface of community and entrepreneurial activities

The identification of public sector interpreting largely with immigrant groups has always meant that the status of this activity is very dependent upon overall social attitudes towards immigration. The 'welfare' halo that then surrounds the field stands in contrast to the largely market-driven and profession-driven field of conference and business interpreting and related translation fields. Yet significantly now, many 'immigrant' languages are also major languages of trade and international relations, yet these links are seldom recognised in the organisation of language services or in practitioners' work.

One significant example is the UK telephone interpreting company Language Line, which started out largely with foundation money providing services to the public sector and found itself consistently in debt with budget blow-outs. Reorganising itself completely, it changed to a structure where fees would be charged all client agencies, at a high rate of £5 per minute (in business hours) or £7 per minute after hours, and now returns a profit. Moreover, it has also actively marketed its services among the business community, and has developed itself at least in part as a general language service resource for many kinds of need. More generally, in at least some countries, perhaps because all language services have not come essentially from the government or welfare sector, or perhaps because language professionals are more used to working also in business settings, we have a situation where there is much more pragmatism and perhaps opportunity seeking than Australia is used to. There are some innovative public language services in Australia and some are keen to develop closer links to business, such as VITS' developing of conference interpreting, but these initiatives are still relatively small and new.

5. Professional development

Professional development is still limping in many countries where practitioners are working in multilingual population settings. Only a few countries have seriously taken up the challenge of embedding expectations of professional development within registration or certification systems. Perhaps the best example here is the USA, where at the federal level and most states, court interpreters are expected to pass a certain number of points of professional development courses or activities in order to go on being certified. In some instances similar moves are being foreshadowed for medical interpreting.

The situation of professional development in Australia shows few signs of progress from when Blewett wrote (1987). Australia is still caught in a system where employers or language services do not and cannot demand professional development from their practitioners: such professional development must be either provided by the employer/language service, reluctantly and at considerable cost, or be undertaken by individual practitioners at their own expense. As no system of registration exists which can enforce professional development, so it remains entirely the responsibility of individual practitioners to develop their skills, but it profits an individual interpreter little to do so as there is no formal recognition of such development, and it will be a cost in almost all cases to be borne by the individual practitioner. Education bodies are only slowly providing any professional development, and the national professional body AUSIT remains weak and unable to insist on adequate professional development. The few glimpses of hope in this area come when language services become particularly concerned over the level of interpreting in some of the low demand languages for which there is no NAATI accreditation and no established training courses, and organise some form of orientation course for these often newly recruited practitioners, and then find that such courses would also be more than useful for many of their already established practitioners! Such courses barely qualify for the category of professional development, but at the moment that is where professional development stands in Australia. Recently, the University of Western Sydney has stepped up its professional development activity, a significant first for educators.

The paradox exists that in the USA, where initial pre-service training courses in I/T are still quite rare, we find the strongest professional development requirements, at least in the area of court interpreting. In Australia, where an accreditation system is now well accepted and opportunities for pre-service training do exist, professional development is almost totally absent.

6. Publicising what is being done

One of the more exasperating features of I/T in Australia is that, however highly practitioners, language service managers or educators would like to praise Australia's approach to I/T, there is precious little ever published or publicised about I/T in Australia that one could with confidence show to anyone else. There is little promotion on the part of individual language services, and precious little academic work. Yet in several other countries, perhaps whose services are or are not anywhere near as well developed as in Australia, it is possible to find informative publications, and in some cases extremely enthusiastic practitioners or managers wanting to tell more. Materials seen from countries as diverse as Belgium, the United States and South Africa are informative and often engrossing. Sometimes, of course, it can be largely show: a glossy publication listing a course, say, may have pages of enthusiastic description, only to reveal in the small print that it is a 30 hour course. But it is worthwhile thinking of what Australia *doesn't* do to beat its own drum: there may be excellent courses or language services but Australia's material scarcely gets beyond the stage of a standard brochure, and academic or more general publishing on the area is virtually non-existent.

As mentioned already under research and dissemination activities, language services or accreditation bodies or educational bodies will be likely to come under increasing scrutiny, and unless they are able to adequately represent their activities to the outside world they could face a difficult time in justifying resources being spent on them. They also forego making their services known in a community or in professional fields where many aspects of I/T are still not well understood.

* * *

The balance sheet for Australia shows an impressive list of achievements, but most of these achievements have now been in place for a considerable period of time and some newer issues are not being well addressed. Blewett wrote nearly ten years ago but in fact she would have little to add to her list today in Australian I/T. It seems urgent to address those areas where we can definitely see better practice in some other countries, for they in many cases indicate where Australian provision has not advanced, and much is at stake if we ignore these crucial areas.

Chapter 10

"What do you do for Somali?"

In this study we have concentrated on communication needs between multilingual populations and host institutions. This is a field of I/T activity that has often had to struggle to be recognised at all – by governments, by a whole variety of social institutions and, most curiously of all , in some instances by other interpreters or translators.

Yet this study has also shown that this apparently diffuse and uncoordinated field is developing in remarkably similar ways around the world, and clear trajectories of development can be identified, as well as some systematic differences in conceptualisation and organisation.

We have seen the often desperate conditions under which language services have been invented and have often had to survive in different countries, but also we can identify in recent years a growing sophistication and commonness of purpose – whether at conferences or in the published literature on I/T, wherever I/T practitioners meet, interpreting for local multilingual needs is on the agenda. That is encouraging in terms of response from practitioners and the profession. At the institutional level, in relation to refugee needs or contacts with indigenous groups, or in ensuring access to health services or make a public administration responsive to its diverse client groups, language services are increasingly identified as a vital and permanent service.

This has meant that around the world there is now a community of interest that can be identified. There is an appreciation by growing numbers of practitioners and policy-makers of basic issues and needs, an understanding of how these can be responded to, what mechanisms (with local variations) can be put in place to meet these needs, and what problems or resistances have to be overcome. It also means that there is a growing understanding of the diversity of local responses, and the willingness to learn from other experiences. In a large number of the countries surveyed there has been a measure of recognition of this field by policy-makers, though inadequacies and misunderstandings are still also apparent. It means, finally, that we can also perceive some capacity to move on to the next stage, which will taking the field in three directions:

1. Extending that which works in particular cases and settings across the field more comprehensively;
2. Serious professionalisation; but also, to clearly show that this will not be a straight line development
3. Increased debate over the role of public or private provision and related resource and control issues.

These three directions seem to inform current practices everywhere, and certainly inform attempts, where there are such, to plan the future of language services in particular countries or institutions. In many countries, elementary political battles for recognition or legitimacy in many instances have been won or at least conceded, but we now face a more mature but also perhaps less spectacular process of slow boring through hard institutional boards in some cases to hold on to what has been achieved, but for the most part to extend and consolidate language services, training and professionalisation. However, changing ideologies of government function and public sector responsibility mean that these developments will not be straightforward.

In many areas there are increasingly common concerns – to name only the most obvious, what does one do for the rarer languages, what used to be called in the literature 'languages of limited diffusion', but which essentially meant non-European languages of limited interest to the I/T profession as it existed in the past. Now, of course, everyone is faced with languages that are becoming quite widely diffused through immigration and refugee patterns in particular, but also through increasing trade, educational and business contact. It is the experience of this author that in recent years contacts around the world with other figures in the I/T field quickly develop into talk of such common concerns, with 'What do you do with Somali?' being asked almost immediately!

Certainly the never ending diversity of languages of encounter is now a constant fact of life that language service providers, educators and accreditation authorities are faced with. Yet it is perhaps a sign of the maturing of the field that the solution for Somali will lie not generally in some kind of radically new or Somali-specific provision but in some kind of extension of present practices to this new language. There may be specific problems to overcome for any new language, but the principles will not change. The development of services in Somali or any other of the minority languages will carry most of the features of earlier development of I/T services for other languages, with all their inadequate starts, initial ad hoc arrangements etc. In time increasingly professional I/T practitioners will evolve for Somali, within the various structures and practices as they exist around the globe, fitting very much into the pattern that say Spanish or Russian or Vietnamese may have. There will be differences in numbers, in some background conditions, in guaranteeing access on as wide a basis as for some of the larger languages, but on the whole it will be coped with by extending already existing practices.

We here explore the possible lines of development of I/T services globally, looking at what is needed in terms of innovative approaches or realistic solutions (the two are often identical) to develop I/T more thoroughly.

1. Extending that which works in particular cases and settings across the field more comprehensively.

At the macro-level, still of overwhelming importance is acceptance by public and private authorities that the linguistic needs of minorities will have to be met and, more germanely to the authorities perhaps, that the effectiveness of their own institutions, laws, markets and administration will only be enhanced through the development of language services. The earlier near-universal reluctance and unwillingness to confront this in many ways has been overcome, but there is still great reluctance often to see this as issue beyond the messy technical issue of providing some kind of service that is good enough. Neither talk of language rights nor human rights, important as they are, seem to have much effect in moving institutions on this; in many instances such insistence also leads to its own political backlash. Moreover, many attempts to point to disadvantage or racism or discrimination themselves are not always sensitive to language issues, or are not seen as relevant by institutions that have the greatest need for language services.

We can see better now the persuasion patterns that can lead to the spread of language services. In some cases these will be linked to issues of discrimination or racism; in others to legal or constitutional guarantees; in many more however it is a matter of persuading institutions of their own interests in communicating better with all their clients, a persuasion that is helped immeasurably by increasing awareness on the part of institutions of the consequences – not least legal and financial – of not making provision for communication.

2. Professionalisation

Given that the development of language services in this field has been largely under the direction of public authorities, we have pointed out in this study that in many cases – Australia being a typical example – practitioners play the role of employees or functionaries in ways that do not enable them to have a view of themselves as professionals, and do not enable links between practitioners. The role of a profession, which is still poorly developed in almost all countries, is thus not only to provide a common identity to practitioners but also to provide a basis of persuasion and lobbying for language services among important institutions or other professions. Often this is quite beyond the capacity of individual practitioners.

This means there would have to be many creative solutions to the very different circumstances of practitioners in various locales and languages and institutional settings. Two examples may be relevant here. First, in relation to Canada's indigenous languages, attempts to train practitioners go far beyond recruiting candidates to standard programs of instruction. Arctic College goes to the extent of providing for accommodation needs and other scheduling needs of students – and their dependents – in attending classes, changing times, providing back-up support, liaising with local communities etc. Reconnaissance is done of local community needs and of who could be a suitable candidate for training. This is a radical departure from a notion of professional formation in which the profession is clearly established, institutionalised and with firm rules of practice and standards which the individual novice fits into. Rather, the key to professional formation in I/T will be sensitivity to different groups and needs.

Secondly, even though greater professionalisation will certainly come about, it is necessary to think of the varied forms this might take. If the image of an I/T professional is that of an urbane practitioner, ready with mobile telephone or fax, acting independently, attending set appointments, receiving ready payment for services and maintaining a professional life style, then this is far from the reality of the existence of many current interpreters, and will continue to differ even when technologies do make some of the technical paraphernalia more accessible. And this will be far from the reality of interpreters' work not because any shortcomings of their own, but because of the actions of employers, attitudes of the wider society and its institutions, all matters beyond the control of single practitioners. It is an empirical question to what extent we will be able to build cadres of professional I/T practitioners in a range of languages in these circumstances. At the moment, there is nothing to say that I/T practitioners cannot form effective professional groups, but also there is nothing to show that a strong profession *must* evolve from present authority-driven institutional relations.

Other groups have found it possible to establish a professional persona even if they are employees or authority-driven (social workers are an excellent example; teachers also in many cases). A key issue for I/T practitioners is numbers and a critical mass in the profession, and the effect of language needs being divided across so many languages, which often serves to fragment the practitioner group. Turner (1995) argues that in fragmented situations our best hope may be to rely on much greater centralisation of language services and practitioners by using greater technology and overcoming institutional divisions, enabling the best practitioners to indeed work full-time and as a career. Yet this is perhaps only one option: other empirically grounded studies and considerable debate by professional bodies are needed of situations in Australia or elsewhere to work out viable options.

The focus must be on interpreting and translating

Our study has shown a diversity of attitudes towards this field of I/T, and in some cases battles have had to be waged by I/T practitioners to get recognition that what they are doing really should be called interpreting or translating, and that there is an affinity between practitioners in this field and in all other varieties of I/T practice. It has been hard for example to gain recognition from the established profession of conference interpreters that the practices of liaison interpreters everywhere should indeed be called 'interpreting'.Writing from a New World perspective, this is a curious professional battle, and one might simply analyse it in terms of different professional orientations, élitism or Eurocentrism or whatever. Yet the issue does not rest there, for clearly as we saw in our survey of different countries, there is indeed quite a battle not only at the level of the profession but at the level of institutional definition and practitioner self-identification, to define what should or should not be seen as interpreting.

As we noted before (Chapter 8), some countries explicitly mark the interpreter role in some way – as 'cultural interpreter', for example, or use a different concept entirely such as as cultural mediator. This issue is one likely to raise strong passions, so some attempted sorting out of positions here would be useful.

On the one hand, most English-speaking countries or those in Scandinavia or Asia tend overwhelmingly to give the interpreter an explicitly linguistic brief, careful to define the role as one of interpreting and putting limits (ethical, professional, heuristic) upon an interpreter's actions; typical ethical limits for example apply to the extent to which interpreter themselves can inform or contribute to the discourse, or play a role in addition to that of interpreter, eg informer, helper, advocate etc. While as we saw in a city such as London, interpreting services can have wide differences in their view of role (Sanders n.d), the prevailing view even in the UK is certainly to define the role of the interpreter in narrow and linguistic terms.

Holders of this view define the role of interpreter as being in principle an intermediary strictly in the sense of conveying the meaning of utterances or texts between parties who do not share a language. What use those parties make of the encounter and the messages is a concern only for the parties themselves; the interpreter (or translator's) role is concerned with conveying messages accurately, but is not concerned with any other intervention in that situation.

On the other hand, the orientation of Western Europe or Canada stresses cultural and even political aspects in defining roles. The basis of a view of cultural interpreter or cultural mediator starts not from a point of principle of what an ideal communication situation must be, but from the very evident lack of communication and lack of understanding and in some cases even hostility to understanding that marks many encounters between host institutions and non-speakers of the dominant language. In the case of the mediator role, definitions derive from the view that, given the language mediator is physically present and intimately involved in the interchange, the model of an interpreter may not fit all that the mediator is asked to do. Further, many of the interactions will be situations of crisis, or some conflict or danger, or in other ways emotionally charged, and not situations where calm communication will be the norm, and these interactions will be between people who often come from extremely different cultural backgrounds where even basic understandings of the situation or issue faced may differ radically.

More extremely, these encounters may occur in situations where it is not at all clear that those engaged in the primary consultation (administrator with settler, doctor with patient) even care about the cultural complexities faced, and in particular where it can be asked whether the professional party is well enough informed and understanding enough of the person and culture they are meeting to enable them to respond accurately. That is, the role of the cultural interpreter makes explicit what is often a worry in these exchanges – racism, antagonism, lack of understanding of the cultural dimension, etc.

Even in a situation of no bad will at all, cultural misunderstanding can persist. Any communication carried out in these circumstances will not correspond to a paradigm where the cultural interpreter or mediator can be solely an interpreter as both sides share a common culture (say, at an international conference on any specialty) and probably common status. Thus, a cultural interpreter will be alert to dysfunctional communication and varying dispositions of the parties, and be in a position to inform and make sure the weaker party is not disadvantaged by being ignored, fobbed off, treated hostilely or unethically etc. The cultural mediator is appointed precisely because there is awareness that cultural dissonance at macro or micro level can distort communication and understanding, ***and that often this will take radical intervention to overcome.***

Those conforming to the strict interpreter as interpreter alone view are often angry or dismissive of the cultural interpreter and cultural mediator view, but for several quite different reasons. For some, such a view is a denial of the title of 'interpreter' to someone who is engaged in the same work as any interpreter anywhere – enabling communication between people who do not share a common language – and other circumstances do not change this basic professional work. It is also believed this view of cultural interpreter or mediator basically denies both professionalism and a clear role for the practitioner, associating them indelibly as being a helper of the weaker party, rather than equally and impartially assisting both sides to complete their own desired communication. Some see just how poorly ethnic advocates or aides work in contexts where they have no identifiable status and their linguistic capacities in either dominant or minority languages have not been subject to testing or training. Others see this debate in developmental terms; that initially in such immigrant situations there is an emphasis on providing a helper or advocate role (which may be more or less professional in its status), but that eventually this must evolve as an interpreter role.

A debate on precisely this issue was one of the highlights of the Geneva Park conference in 1995.

It is not likely that these differences will be easily resolved, even though the English-speaking/Scandinavian view may have the greater numbers at the moment. Two comments will suffice. First, the battle between these two sides tends to ignore the fact that we can identify a whole spectrum of language-related roles, which can give a reference point for both views of interpreting. It is possible to identify bilingual aides; bilingual workers at various levels; interpreters; and ethnic workers at various levels using their languages, such as ethnic health workers or indeed the cultural mediators. The accreditation system in Australia has historically included both interpreters and bilingual aides in the accreditation levels, with defined differences between them. One of the aspects of comprehensiveness in the Australian situation is precisely this differentiation, and the identification of appropriate positions for practitioners with different skills. It is perfectly possible to accept there can and indeed should be a variety of practices all using language skills as a component; for interpreters, this will be an almost exclusive component. The danger lies not in recognising that different practices exist but rather to try to legislate what a role must include, for example the argument that an interpreter's role in community settings must include an advocacy or aide component. This takes us into rather sterile debates over the definitions of an interpreter, rather than looking at the specific (and often diverse) language needs that arise in particular areas.

Secondly, with all that is said above, it is quite possible to look at the issue of roles in a different way, to bring out the complexity of a single role rather than the spectrum of roles. A useful distinction here is between *professional ethics or role* on the one hand and *institutional role or ethics* on the other. It will be the case that a worker in a particular institution will work by a set of institutional imperatives that they must respond to in a way that, say, a freelancer who occasionally works in that institution would not have. For example, an interpreter working full-time in hospital will have a much more diverse set of relations to patients, to staff, to the practices of the hospital than a freelance interpreter visiting the hospital for a single interview. The hospital interpreter, for example, may independently talk to patients; may usefully sit on case committees, not to do interpreting but to assist in case management etc., behaviour that may be quite inappropriate for a freelance interpreter to be asked to do, or behaviour that might be quite illegitimate in other settings for example for a court interpreter. Given the overarching institutional imperative of a hospital to contribute to health care and patient well-being, that is what guides the interpreter in this setting. They in no way through this lose their professional role of interpreter.

Liaison interpreters are in situations marked by complexity of roles, institutional imperatives and social forces. It is what makes this kind of interpreting both challenging and occasionally overwhelming. It is far from any view of interpreting as a linguistic skill alone in rarefied and controlled atmosphere. The present debates over role and definitions still for the most part seek to find simple answers to quite complex professional issues. The basis of an I/T profession and of a clearly defined role which can be understood by practitioners themselves and by other institutions and professions must be one based upon the practice of interpreting or translating, but we are only now beginning to understand the complexities that this interpreter (and occasionally translator) role calls for.

3. Response to economic rationalism

A critical issue confronting all those working in language services, is that the markedly growing awareness of language needs and attempts to build and develop language services today come virtually at the same time as universal moves to cut public sector expenditure, corporatise or privatise services, and in some cases review commitment to assistance for migrants or refugees. We have treated in detail some of these moves in Australia but equally they have been reported by many individuals and organisations around the world contacted for this study. While these moves may be broadly similar, there are nonetheless important local nuances that also suggest different ways of having language services and commitment to communication survive.

Paradoxically, while we have argued the limits of legalistic approaches to provide language services, services based on constitutional or legal rights will be in a strong position at least to hold their own in terms of support in public policy. This will be even more the case if groups previously poorly catered to by language services – indigenous groups in particular – can continue the impressive political salience they have achieved in many countries and maintain pressure to have their languages catered for. Even here, however, there could be dangers because of this stress on clients' rights, rather than a more comprehensive policy approach to language services as essential to deliver mainstream services to diverse client groups. Such a stress, as we have noted in previous chapters, brings its own political reactions at the legal or constitutional level, challenging certain rights. While such reactions are invariably a form of masked racism, their strength and power to convince an increasingly inconsolable mainstream should not be underestimated: if the unthinkable happened to bring about an English Only situation in the USA or analogously elsewhere, there would be profound consequence for I/T.

For those who have what we have termed ad hoc services at one end of the spectrum, or comprehensive services at the other, cutbacks and moves to rationalise hold particular threats. For those with ad hoc services, these cutbacks come in many cases just as embryonic language services have been established and seemingly progress could be made on turning them into more comprehensive provision.

Strategies for those groups of services must include the following:

i) Costing the effect of lack of language services.
ii) Attending to legal issues.
iii) Continuing (there is no other way) of promoting the perspective that language services are not there for 'them' – for the immigrants, for outsiders or those of low status – but rather are essential services for mainstream institutions. There is no alternative to promoting this argument, in the face of bitter opposition, racism, or numbing neglect.
iv) Promoting models of comprehensive services which do work and which can help overcome many of the dysfunctions that societies without adequate language services are being forced to become more aware of.

At the same time, it is important not to disregard economic opportunities of various kinds in present contexts. An issue which will reward much more study than has been possible in this current report is the growing convergence of trade and business language needs on the one hand, with language needs of local multilingual communities and the institutions they relate to.

Work for trade and business has always been the province of translator work and in some instances at high levels for conference interpreters; at lower levels a variety of practices have held sway, from employing interpreters to using agents who speak other languages to using bilingual staff who may or may not have any I/T skills to perform interpreting. This area is of course unregulated in this regard, and characterised by widely varying practices re language needs from country to country and company to company. Nevertheless, it is now clearly the case that many of the languages present in multilingual populations are also useful languages of trade and other international contacts, as commented on on the previous chapter.

Moves towards economic rationalism are apparent in many countries; the place of I/T however is not simply dependent upon government budgets or cost-cutting exercises alone. While budgets may indeed be cut in some areas, governments in many cases are recognising and accepting new responsibilities, particularly towards their increasingly diverse populations. A very diverse picture emerges of changes and shifts in other relevant government and non-government initiatives, such as anti-discrimination legislation, concerns for racism, legal challenge, political backlashes of various kinds, all of which ensure that the relation between economic rationalism and I/T will not be a simple one.

We conclude this report by relating these back to the I/T situation in Australia, to see how it may fare in the new policy environment, and how this may reflect potentially more global tendencies.

I/T in Australia at the Crossroads

From our report so far it is possible to enumerate the principles that have governed the organisation of language services in Australia:

1) Australian language services have been fundamentally based upon a view of obligation to provide such services. In some cases this can be seen as a right to language services, though this has not essentially been a rights-driven approach. This carries the corollary that the NESB client in any situation in the public sector should not pay for language services.
2) Language services initially arose in an environment of little precedent for their services, few resources and on occasions little understanding of their role on the part of users. As well as providing a service, they were thus inevitably drawn into issues that in other fields of service provision may be more taken for granted – qualifications of practitioners, established ethical codes, training and policies development on reach and characteristics of service provision.
3) Structures of accreditation, training, and professional formation and development have assisted language services, but language services are still often responsible for operating despite weaknesses in those other structures, in order to provide language services of quality in all languages and locations.
4) Quality comes through familiarity of practitioners with the areas in which they work and the specialised challenges different demands make of practitioners. Practitioners who work in areas providing specialised services must be trained for and equipped to satisfactorily meet the demands placed upon their I/T skills, over and above their general professional level of accreditation.
5) Preparation of I/T practitioners must be matched by user education and professional liaison with significant user groups, both for educational reasons and more generally to raise the corporate image of I/T among other user groups.
6) Policy development is an important aspect of language services. Crucial here is that language services be not seen as simply a 'service' provided without question which the user agency does not think about. Issues of access, equity and relations with clients are often statutorily demanded. This means that major users of language services should bear responsibility – financial responsibility but also other responsibilities eg assessing need – which are best established through the closest possible working both at a service provision level and policy level between user agencies and language services.
7) Language services as professional services are a resource to the institutions using them, and to the wider purposes of government and other enterprises in communication both within Australia and overseas.

The conscious promotion of these principles in Australia means that in many ways this country has built in a comprehensiveness that stands as an important model in I/T. What is important here is not so much that Australia's model should be adopted or followed by others; there is no easy cross-national adoption of others' ideas in such a complex field. The importance of Australian experience rather is that it has had – with few exceptions – simply a longer experience, with more time to make mistakes, dead-ends, u-turns, and to prove what is enduring and appropriate. The point is not prescription but learning from extensive experience. Even Australia's federal system adds richness to the picture as there are currently several different models of organising language services. The constants in the picture – a universal accreditation system, government and social commitment to language services etc – are impressive achievements, for in many countries there is still not government commitment to this field; also, in many cases those interpreters working in the community gain scant recognition from other institutions or even their own I/T colleagues.

Australia's development of its I/T system has given a structure of unusual comprehensiveness, but a structure that has also been quite complex and very dependent upon a large number of bodies and users (eg tertiary education institutions, professions, service providers, bureaucracies) both understanding and desiring I/T of a professional standard. This necessary complexity also means that there is a patchy picture in terms of the interest in or willingness to use language services even among public organisations that theoretically have been obliged to use them for decades by now (Harrison et al 1992). Despite Blewett's (1987) description of it as 'leading the world', it is a structure now very much under question if not quite threat – not because of basic objections to the model itself, but because of other government ideologies and a rethink of public sector obligations, while the underpinning of a strong profession and a ready understanding of the role of I/T have not yet been established.

Turner's 1995 paper speaks of great problems in realising the promise of I/T in Australia, with the government balking at continued service provision and the existence of only a 'barely viable profession'. Coming less than a decade after Blewett's invitation to celebrate, this is a sobering reflection on present difficulties. At the same time, it is also a measure of the field maturing and beginning to raise issues in public ways about the future of the whole I/T field. In this crossroads situation, it is imperative that debate about the field and possibilities in it is continued and broadened.

The link between professionalisation and language services is fundamental here. Australia's development of language services was, we have argued, authority-driven rather than profession-driven, but if there is to be progress to better service provision, the lack of a strong profession becomes increasingly of concern.

The fact that all agencies that seek to promote themselves in the field use or claim to use accredited interpreters (at least in languages in which there is accreditation) is in one way the ultimate triumph of the long battle for accreditation standards, for which NAATI and the profession must take credit. However, there is still no system of registration, and perhaps never will be, no agreement over fees (and other industrial relations policies now argue there should not be mandatory fees set), still no obligatory professional development and still no clear guarantee of ethics. As long as such a situation continues, we may have processes of corporatisation or tendering out of services to the lowest bidder, but quality control may be very hard to enforce. The question over whether there will be care over quality control is a moot point and perhaps the issue worth most attention in the next few years of evolving language service policy.

While there has been much concern recently to stress efficiency, market forces, level playing fields for public and private agencies and similar rationalist sentiments, it is important to understand factors in I/T that do not make this field as readily rationalisable as may at first seem. Arguments for market mechanisms and having 'service delivery' outsourced or privatised usually stress particular feedback chains that can force a market to work properly, such as adequate complaints mechanism, performance criteria etc, so that it is not simply a matter of the cheapest service provider being able to provide service of any quality. Yet the very logic of language services means that simple measures of satisfaction or appropriateness are not available usually to either of the clients using a particular instance of a language service. How are NESB clients (the non-paying client usually) to exercise their right to complain or express their evaluation of a service provided, except through, presumably, another interpreter or translator? How will the (usually paying) English-speaking client, whether independent professional or business person or public official, be able to evaluate an interpreter or translator beyond punctuality or other merely formal aspects? It *is* possible for those who do not speak the other language to go a good deal of the way towards evaluating an interpreter perfectly well, but only if they know what to look for, and preferably be trained to do so. Not knowing how to really use or evaluate an interpreter seems to be a major factor in the reluctance still of many institutions to use language services.

However, these are not the only reasons why complaints-based criteria of market satisfaction are not appropriate to this field. A vital issue here is that often either of the clients may have completely inappropriate views of what the interpreter should be on about. It is still the case that some professionals are happy for the interpreter themselves to get information or conduct an interview with the NESB client, giving then the gist to the professional for quick resolution or treatment; some NESB clients will have any number of views of what the interpreter should or should not do for them. A measure of 'satisfaction' or 'complaint' in these instances may be utterly inappropriate. An analogy might be to think of a doctor, say, who knows that particular clients will only really be satisfied if the doctor prescribes them drugs and preferably gives them an injection. A study of satisfaction or market demand may indeed show great satisfaction on the part of the doctor's patients if that is the treatment they always succeed in getting, but such a doctor may be acting quite unethically. Because ethical issues are matters of principle and judgments, rather than simple rule-following or market-following activities, they are not settled by reference to 'complaints'. A market-oriented response to this alone would lead to *proper* professional conduct being penalised.

At the other extreme, where an interpreter really does act unprofessionally and there may be complaints about that, without some system of professional accountability such as registration, it will remain perfectly possible for that practitioner simply to ply their wares for another agency serving different clients.

Another important factor is concern over whether the interpreter really understands the context, terminology and related procedures of whatever field the encounter is set in. The best guarantees here would seem not to be the hit or miss of market response, but to have reliable methods of professional accreditation, training, specific acknowledgment of fields of expertise etc of the practitioners on the one hand; and training and cultural and linguistic awareness on the part of users on the other. Yet exercises in tendering out, corporatisation or other rationalist exercises usually concentrate solely on service delivery in terms of numbers and frequency of interpreted situation. They generally do not include such concerns for quality assurance, beyond stipulations that accredited practitioners will be used in languages where such are available, with little monitoring of outcomes and little care for such.

Paradoxically, the move to reduce some public sector language services and to have private providers service public sector clients makes it even more imperative for a higher degree of professionalisation, for few private agencies provide in-service or training or orientation, nor are these factors usually looked at in moves to rationalise services. Few tendering processes have regard to issues of training, of user education, of professional development work which are so vital in I/T because the structures that ensure these standards in other professions or occupations are still incomplete in the case of I/T.

An alternative to comprehensive provision is of course envisageable: that I/T retreats from a pretence to professionalism, that lowest-common denominator standards only are required, that agencies encourage once more NESB clients to bring their own interpreters etc. It is significant however that governments have been extremely sensitive to this possibility and have certainly very strongly affirmed their commitment to services as part of their ethnic affairs and multicultural policies. Issues of equity and access to services stand above issues of market demand. Too much has been secured in the past few decades to easily overturn that commitment now. How this commitment will square up with imperatives to rationalise budgets will need to be closely monitored.

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Finally, no matter how enthusiastically or reservedly one evaluates Australia's record in language services, it is still very much the case that debate on language service issues tends to include few voices. Neither the profession, nor private agencies nor government services have really marked their influence on policy development, which has often been subject to applying the latest ideology of government policy to the I/T field whether it fits or not. With a tiny academic field related to it, and with I/T still remaining one of the more obscure areas even for those conversant with other issues in multiculturalism or with government service provision, policy debate on I/T seems to encompass a small constituency. There is still for example no detailed literature on private I/T providers, on NAATI, on sign language interpreting, on interpreting in Aboriginal languages, and there are only rudimentary accounts of most public sector services. Indeed, among the few published sources for the language services scholar, the almost endless reports and evaluations of the various language services provide perhaps the single most useful source; but these are almost always written for particular policy outcomes or from particular bureaucratic presumptions, from which a truer description of situations and events has to be read, often with some difficulty.

Again this reflects international experience, with only now some literature and infrastructure developing to bring together those involved in the field, and extend interest and knowledge beyond those few practitioners trying to establish, extend or defend their language services. It is the hope of this present work that this field will receive some of the sustained intellectual work it so richly deserves to give us detailed historical, contemporary and comparative accounts of the I/T field in all its complexity.

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Appendix 1

Agencies and Contacts

1) AUSTRALIA

Federal

- **Translating and Interpreting Service [TIS] (formerly 'Telephone Interpreter Service')**
  Head Office: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
  Benjamin Offices
  5th Floor, Chan Street
  Belconnen, ACT 2614
  (P.O Box 25, Belconnen, ACT 2614)
  Home Page: http://www.immi.gov.au
  Regional offices in all States and Territories
  – annual reports of DIMA include section on TIS.
  – publications on TIS, on how to work with interpreters and related matters

  Department of Immigration (later Department of Labour and Immigration, then Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, then Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs; most recently Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) *Annual Reports* Canberra: Parliamentary Papers.

- **Department of Social Security/Centrelink**
  Multicultural Services Unit, Centrelink
  Locked Bag 6, Haymarket, NSW 1238
  Fax: (+61 2) 9323 8008
  http://www.centrelink.gov.au
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Section
  DSS National Office, Tuggeranong, ACT 2900
  – Annual Reports include sections on Migrant Services Unit and ATSI Services Section
  – occasional other reports relevant to I/T eg on Access and Equity.
  – multilingual information materials available *inter alia* through the Internet

- **National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters** [NAATI]
  Suite 1, Playoust Building,
  Hawker Place,
  Hawker ACT 2614
  (PO Box 40)
  Fax: (+61 2) 6255 1889
  e-mail: naati@enternet.com.au
  Home Page:
  http://people.enternet.com.au/~naati/
  – Annual reports
  – materials on NAATI tests (information for candidates; sample tests etc)
  – other publications relevant to I/T
  – list of publications
  – *NAATI News*, quarterly

- **Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators** [AUSIT]
  GPO Box 2579
  Sydney NSW 2001
  publishes journal *Antipodes. Australian Translation Journal*
  Code of Ethics
  – information on Institute and its functions

- **Attorney-General's Department (Commonwealth)**
  Indigenous Issues Policy Unit
  Courts and Tribunals Branch
  Robert Garran Offices
  National Circuit
  Barton ACT 2600
  Fax: (+61 2) 6250 5904

State bodies

- **Central Health Interpreter Service** [CHIS]
  Unit 7, 288 Mt Alexander Rd, Ascot Vale,
  Victoria 3032
  Fax: (+61 3) 9375 4460
  – Annual report
  – Pamphlets and other materials related to health and health interpreting

- **Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service [VITS]**
  1st Floor, 371 Spencer St, Melbourne, Victoria
  3000
  fax: (+61 3) 9280 1960
  – information on its general and specialist services (eg Legal Interpreter Service)
  – information on Legal Orientation Course

- **South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission [SAMEAC]**
  Interpreting and Translating Centre
  24 Flinders Street
  Adelaide, South Australia 5000
  Fax: (+61 8) 5226 1992
  – Annual reports
  – information on services

- **NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission** [EAC]
  Language Services Division
  164 Liverpool Rd
  Ashfield, NSW 2131
  Fax: (+61 2) 9798 3860
  – Annual Report of EAC
  – in-house, promotional and research publications on large range of I/T issues eg careers in I/T, legal interpreting, I/T in sexual abuse and domestic violence etc

- **NSW Health Department**
  Health Care Interpreter Service
  Leo Burnett House
  73 Miller St, North Sydney, NSW 2059
  fax: (+61 2) 9391 9615
  Decentralized structure with six areas
  – Annual Report of Health Department
  – Publications related to ethnic health, access etc

Educational bodies

- **Deakin University**
  Centre for Research & Development in Interpreting and Translating
  Faculty of Arts, Burwood Campus,
  Burwood, Victoria 3125
  Fax: (+61 3) 9244 3984/6755

- **University of Western Sydney**
  Division of Education and Languages
  Macarthur Campus
  PO Box 555 Campbelltown, NSW 2560
  Fax: (+61 2) 9772 1565
  Home Page: http://www.macarthur.uws.edu.au
  Contact: Stuart Campbell
  – information on courses
  – professional development activities
  – lists of publications and conference proceedings
  – Language Acquisition Research Centre

- **University of Queensland**
  Department of Japanese Studies
  St Lucia, Queensland 4067
  Contact: Peter Davidson
  – information on courses

2) INTERNATIONAL

BELGIUM

- **Ethnic Minorities and Health Centre and Flanders Migrants' Integration Centre**
  Rogierlaan 58,
  1030 Brussels, Belgium
  Fax +32 2 245 7135
  – *Project intercultural health mediators*, Project brochure (1992)

BRAZIL

- **Centro Interdepartamental de Traducao e Terminologia (CITRAT)**
  Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciencias Humanas
  Universidade de Sao Paulo
  Contact: Profa. Dra. Stella E.O. Tagnin
  C. Postal 8105
  05508-990 – Sao Paulo – SP
  – *Tradterm*, yearly journal, bilingual [Portuguese and English/French], translation research articles.

CANADA

- **Alberta Vocational College-Edmonton**
  9652 77 Street
  Edmonton AB
  Contact: Terese Szlamp-Fryga
  Trainer/Curriculum Developer
  – *Screening Interpreters, Criteria and Resources*

- **Association of Visual Language Interprèters of Canada (AVLIC)**
  11337 – 61 Avenue
  Edmonton, AB T6M 1M3
  – general information leaflets
  – conference papers
  – *Interpreters in the Educational Setting*, A Resource Document, June 1992
  – *Interpreters in Legal Settings*
  – Canadian Evaluation System Manual

- **Banque Interrégionale d'Interpretes**
  3725 Rue Saint-Denis
  Montreal, Quebec H2X 3L9
  – information on services
  – publication *Accessibility of Services to Ethnocultural Communities* (In French & English)

- **Critical Link Newsletter**
  c/- Diana Abraham, Community Programs Branch
  Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation
  16th Floor, 77 Bloor St, W.Toronto
  Ontario M7A 2R9
  Fax: (+1) 416 314 7467
  – Newsletter maintains links developed at Geneva Park conference
  – information on community interpreting – services, training, publications etc

- **Health Care Interpreter Partnership Project**
  Contact: Dr. Silvana Carr
  Coordinator, Court Interpreting Program
  Vancouver Community College
  Continuing Education
  100 West 49th Avenue
  Vancouver B.C. V5Y 2Z6
  – *Standards for Health Care Interpreting* [information leaflet]
  – *Overcoming Language Barriers to Quality Health Care* [information leaflet]

- **Independent Interpreter Referral Service, Manitoba**
  204-301 Nassau Street N.,
  Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 2J5 Canada
  Provision of interpreters for the hearing-impaired
  – Annual reports

- **Languages Commissioner of the NWT**
  Cunningham Building 4
  Box 1320,
  Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9
  Contact: Betty Harnum
  – Annual reports
  – *The Languages of Our Land* [information brochure on NWT Official Languages Act]
  – Bibliography of articles on court interpreting and interpreting in the NWT also available

- **London Cultural Interpretation Service**
  717 Dundas Street
  London, ON N5W 2Z5
  Contact: Nathan Garber, Executive Director
  – Annual reports
  – *Tips on communicating through a cultural interpreter*
  – *Mission, Goals, Values, Beliefs*
  – several publications on history, structure of service

- **Nunavut Arctic College Nunatta Campus**
  PO Box 600
  Iqaluit NT X0A 0H0
  Contact: Dr. Susan Sammons
  Interpreter/Translator Program
  – *Nunattinni Katujjiqatigiit Tusaajinut* [newsletter]
  – Interpreter/Translator program outline

- **Ottawa-Carlton Cultural Interpretation Service**
  330-441 MacLaren Street
  Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2P 2H3
  Contact: Dong Liu, Executive Director
  – annual reports
  – information on service
  – development of 'Cultural Interpreter Language and Interpreting Skills Assessment Tools' [CILISAT]

- **Vancouver Community College Continuing Education**
  100 West 49th Avenue
  Vancouver B.C. V5Y 2Z6
  Contact: Dr. Silvana Carr
  Coordinator, Court Interpreting Program
  – *Court Interpreting* [program information brochure]
  – extensive materials on courses

- **York University – Ross N828 Deaf Education Faculty of Education**
  4700 Keele Street
  North York ON M3J 1P3
  Contact: Campbell McDermid
  – Cambell McDermid has numerous contacts and considerable bibliographical material relating to sign language interpreting in North America

FRANCE

- **Inter Service Migrants Interprétariat**
  12 Rue Guy de La Brosse
  75005 Paris, France
  Contact: Michel Sauvetre
  – information on services
  – publication *L'interprétariat en milieu social* – Proceedings of Strasbourg October 1995 meeting of language services from 14 European countries (available in English and French)

HONG KONG

- **Law Drafting Division – Legal Department**
  Attorney General's Chambers
  8/F Queensway Government Offices
  66 Queensway
  Contact: Miss Miranda Ng, Senior Asst. Law Draftsman
  – Notes on translation into Chinese of English language legislation

MALAYSIA

Malaysian National Institute of Translation
Tingkat 2
Menara Pengkalen
2, Jalan Changkat Ceylon
50200 Kuala Lumpur
Contact: Dr. Ahmad Zaki Abu Bakar, Managing Director
– brochure outlining organisation and services offered

- **University of Malaya – Division of Translation and Interpretation**
  Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
  59100 Kuala Lumpur
  Contact: Wong Fook Khoon, Associate Professor
  – prospectus
  – program outlines

NEW ZEALAND

- **Auckland Institute of Technology – Centre for Translation and Interpreting Studies**
  Private Bag 92006
  Auckland 1020
  Contact: Dr. Sabine Fenton, Director
  – *A great career starts here!* [leaflet outlining I/T courses on offer]

NORWAY

- **Utlendingsdirektoratet (National Office for Immigration)**
  Postboks 8108 Dep 0032
  OSLO
  – information leaflet outlining services, including interpreting and information service

SOUTH AFRICA

- **National Language Project**
  PO Box 378
  Salt River 7924
  Contact: Nigel Crawhall, Director
  – *Bua!* [magazine for language teachers and teacher trainers and those involved in language policy and planning]

- **Justice College**
  Private Bag X659
  0001 Pretoria, South Africa
  Contact: Johan Kok
  – information on training for court interpreting

SWEDEN

- **Stockholm University – Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies**
  Stockholm S-10691
  Contact: Helge Niska, Assistant Director
  – information leaflet about IITS and university I/T programs
  – *The training of community interpreters in Sweden within adult education and the universities* [information leaflet]

UNITED KINGDOM

- **Heriot-Watt University – School of Languages**
  Riccarton
  Edinburgh EH14 4AS
  Contact: Professor Anthony Stanforth, Head of School
  – Information leaflets on:
    – MSc/Diploma in Interpreting and Translating
    – PhD/Masters/Diploma in Arabic-English Translation and Interpreting
    – B.A. Languages (Interpreting and Translating)
    – B.A. International Business and Languages

- **Institute of Linguists**
  24a Highbury Grove
  London N5 2DQ
  Fax: +44 171 354 0202
  Contact: Edda Ostarhild, Director
  – *The Linguist* [journal]
  – Diploma in Public Service Interpreting information leaflet
  – DPSI dates, fees and entry procedures
  – DPSI examination syllabus
  – DPSI specimen/past examination papers
  – DPSI guidelines
  – National register of Public Service Interpreters information leaflet
  – other information leaflets on:
    – Institute of Linguists
    – Alternative syllabus for contemporary languages
    – Bilingual skills certificates
    – Conditions of Membership
    – Diploma in English
    – Examinations in Languages for International Communication
    – Language Services Unit

- **The Pointon Partnership**
  49C Wellington Rd, Bush Hill Park
  Enfield EN1 2PG
  London, England
  Fax: (+44) 181 367 1494
  Contact: Dr Tom Pointon
  – research on Telephone Interpreting Services

- **University of Westminster– School of Languages**
  9-18 Euston Centre
  London NW1 3ET
  Contact: Ms Janet Fraser / Mr. Jeremy Verrinder
  – Postgraduate programme in languages module; registration; handbooks

UNITED STATES

- **California Court Interpreters Association**
  PO Box 5035
  Garden Grove, CA 92645-0035
  Home Page: http://www.ccia.org/
  Contact: Richard Weatherby, President
  – *The Polyglot* [quarterly newsletter]
  – CCIA General information leaflet
  – Information sheet for those interested in becoming interpreters or learning interpreting
  – The CCIA Interpreter Training Kit [books and tapes]
  – Partial listing of institutions and individuals offering courses and training for interpreters

- **Education Development Center, Inc.**
  55 Chapel Street
  Newton MA 02160
  Contact: Maria-Paz Beltran Avery, Project Director
  – Medical Interpreters Standards of Practice [produced with Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association]

- **Monterey Institute of International Studies International Interpretation Resource Center**
  425 Van Buren Street,
  Monterey, CA 93940, USA
  Fax: +1 408 647 3542/4199
  Contact: Holly Mikkelson
  – research, teaching materials, consultancies
  – project on Community Interpreting; an Emerging Profession
  – Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation
  – links with Stanford University Hospital for intern programs in interpreting

- **Resources for Cross Cultural Health**
  8915 Sudbury Road
  Silver Spring
  MD 20009
  Contact: Julia Puebla Fortier
  – *Cross Currents,* [quarterly newsletter]
  – general information leaflet

- **Stanford University Hospital Interpreter Services**
  300 Pasteur Drive
  Room H2101
  Stanford CA 94305-5232
  Contact: Linda Haffner, Director/ Monique Alfaro, Internship Coordinator
  – Introduction and Overview of interpreter internship
  – *The Intern's Companion,* [information for intern medical interpreters, produced in conjunction with Monterey Institute of International Studies]
  – A Practical Glossary for Chinese-English Medical Interpretation
  – A Handbook for Japanese Interpreters at Stanford University Hospital
  – *Medical Staff Update*
  – *SHS Forum* [monthly publication for Stanford Health Services employees]

- **University of Charleston,**
  Charleston, South Carolina, USA 29407
  Contact: Virginia Benmaman
  – information on M.A. in bilingual legal interpreting

- **University of Texas at Austin – Department of Spanish and Portuguese**
  Batts Hall 110, Austin, Texas 78712, USA
  Contact: Fritz Hensey
  – research on interpreter use by institutions

Resources in the USA on Internet

While resources on the Internet in many fields multiply at an alarming rate, it is possible to still get a good overview of I/T through the Internet and the field is not expanding quite as exponentially as others.

List related to community interpreting interests, arising from Geneva Park conference:
yampolsk@web.apc.org

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
Home Page: http://www.najit.org/

California Court Interpreters Association
Home Page: http://www.ccia.org/

'The Translation Home Companion'
(North California Translators Association and Language Automation Inc)
Home Page:
http://www.rahul.net/lai/companion.html

These home pages have excellent resources and useful links to other sites related to I/T.

Appendix 2

Translating and Interpreting Service – Statistics

1995-6 National totals: telephone interpreting calls plus on-site interpreting assignments; by language

Vietnamese	56,053	Romanian	1,614	Hokkien	211
English	32,728	Unknown calls	843	Slovene	77
Spanish	36,438	Burmese	1,257	Swahili	78
Mandarin	27,061	Tagalog	996	Slovak	115
Cantonese	23,736	Lao	994	Oromo	70
Arabic	19,861	Assyrian	738	Hebrew	60
Croatian	15,597	Tetum	470	Swedish	65
Russian	13,471	Maltese	422	Danish	42
Turkish	13,541	Amharic	500	Lithuanian	69
Serbian	11,806	Samoan	489	Turkmen	151
Greek	10,926	Czech	412	Fijian	43
Japanese	7,507	Hindu	379	Latvian	23
Polish	8,447	Tamil	529	Nepalese	23
Italian	9,052	Albanian	363	Estonian	23
Persian	8,264	Sinhalese	401	Deaf – Auslan	467
Korean	5,862	Bulgarian	349	Yiddish	13
Bosnian	8,667	Punjabi	376	Uzbek	5
Macedonian	4,761	Ukrainian	325	Gujarati	3
Khmer	5,247	Tongan	420	Pidgin	12
Somali	2,907	Hmong	580	Papua New Guini	1
Hakka	2,527	Armenian	234	Tartar	1
Portuguese	3,136	Urdu	350		
Thai	2,322	Bengali	236	**TOTAL**	**355,550**
Indonesian	1,869	Teo Chiew	252		
Kurdish	1,902	Afghani	189	**By telephone:**	**260,914**
Tigrigna	1,899	Dutch	165	**On-site:**	**94, 636**
Hungarian	1,503	Dari	256	(Source: TIS, 1997)	
French	1,194	Malay	221		
German	1,208	Finnish	146		

Note: TIS, the language service run by the federal Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, is the largest language service in Australia. This table shows both the volume of work performed by this one agency, plus the diversity of language demands that are made of it. Note in particular that the highest demand language (currently Vietnamese) represents less than one-sixth of all language demands: demand is widely scattered across languages rather than being concentrated in a few languages. As detailed in the text, TIS plays an important function both as a front-line agency and as an essential backup to specialised services in the main States.

Appendix 3

Glossary of Acronyms

AACLAME	Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education
AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACITAL	Association of Community Interpreters, Translators, Advocates and Linkworkers
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
A-Gs	Attorney-General's (Department)
AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
ALO	Aboriginal Liaison Officer
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation [Forum] [Conference]
ARC	Australian Research Council
ASL	American Sign Language
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
Auslan (also AUSLAN)	Australian Sign Language
AUSIT	Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators
AVLIC	Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada
CAE	College of Advanced Education
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CHIS	Central Health Interpreter Service
CILISAT	Cultural Interpreter Language and Interpreting Skills Assessment Tools
CITEAA	Conference of Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia
CLA	Community Language Allowance
CMEP	Child Migrant Education Program
COPQ	Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications
CRDIT	Centre for Research and Development in Interpreting and Translating
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DI	Department of Immigration
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
DILGEA	Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DP	Displaced Person

DSS	Department of Social Security
EAC	Ethnic Affairs Commission
EIS	Education Interpreting Service
ETIS	Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service
ESL	English as a Second Language
FIT	International Federation of Translators
GIS	General Interpreting Service
GP	General Practitioner
HCIS	Health Care Interpreter Service
HTS	Health Translation Service
I/T	Interpreting/Translating
LA	Language Australia
LAPA	Linguistic Availability Proficiency Allowance
LIS	Legal Interpreting Service
LOTE	Language Other Than English
LSQ	Langue des Signes du Quebec
MHA	Mental Health Authority
MHIS	Mental Health Interpreter Service
MIIS	Monterey Institute of International Studies
MLO	Migrant Liaison Officer
MSU	Migrant [Multicultural] Services Unit
MTIS	Multilingual Telephone Information Service
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Inspectors
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
NLIA	National Languages Institute of Australia
NLLIA	National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia
NTITS	Northern Territory Interpreting and Translating Service
NWT	North-West Territories
PO	Professional Officer
QAAC	Qualifications Assessment and Advisory Committee
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RPSI	Register of Public Sector Interpreters
SALS	South Australian Language Services
SAMEAC	South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SIIT	State Institute of Interpreting and Translating
SSAT	Social Security Appeals Tribunal
STIBC	Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEC	Texas Employment Commission
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TIS	Telephone Interpreter Service *also* Translating and Interpreting Service
TISIS	Translating and Interpreting Service Information System
UWS	University of Western Sydney
VITS	Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service

This study updates the author's 1991 examination of the development of Interpreting/Translating (I/T) in Australia. It looks at recent, often very turbulent, changes to language services and the organisation of I/T which have resulted from changing public sector ideologies, government priorities and economic changes, as well as growing sophistication in service delivery and organisation of the profession. The study also explores more briefly the development of I/T in several other countries now responding to communication needs as a result of growing multilingual populations. The issue of I/T is no longer one for countries of classical immigration alone, but for many countries faced with new demographics, particularly from the effects of immigration. Importantly, Australia still leads the way in sophistication of provision, but recent changes to I/T policy now threaten some gains made, and other countries are rapidly developing their potential in this field.

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